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# General Assembly

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**55**th plenary meeting
Thursday, 15 November 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

*President:* Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Floods in Algeria**

**The President**: May I, on behalf of the members of the General Assembly, extend to the Government and the people of Algeria our deepest sympathy with respect to the tragic loss of life and the extensive material damage resulting from the recent floods in Algeria.

**Agenda item 9** (*continued*)

**General debate**

**Address by Mr. Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria.

*Mr. Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming Mr. Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Saxe-Coburg-Gotha** (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): A year after the unique Millennium Assembly, we can say that the United Nations is playing an enhanced, more important role as a collective tool for meeting the challenges facing the world.

Bulgaria welcomes the re-election of Mr. Kofi Annan as Secretary-General, and hails the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to him and to the Organization.

International terrorism has become aggressive and powerful, and threatens not only States but also the freedom of the human spirit, as proved by the world Organization's committed and active stance vis-à-vis recent terrorist acts, along with the unanimously adopted Security Council resolutions condemning them. Bulgaria unequivocally supported those resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). The National Assembly and the Government of Bulgaria have adopted similar declarations on ensuring a common effort in the fight against terrorism.

Let me recall that the fight will be incomplete without moral — even spiritual — commitment. Let us not forget that the mere pursuit of material well-being is not a panacea; other values are needed to improve the lives of peoples. In a "virtual society", there is a need for real values and for a framework acceptable to both the poor and the rich.

I take this opportunity to convey the condolences of the Bulgarian people to the citizens of the United States of America with respect to the terrorist acts of 11 September. We all admire the steadfastness and courage they have displayed in addressing this tragedy and its aftermath.

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I am particularly proud to observe that, at a time when the role and the importance of the United Nations are on the rise, the Republic of Bulgaria is about to assume the responsibilities of a non-permanent member of the Security Council. For the Bulgarian people and its Government, our election to that important organ of the world Organization constitutes recognition of the international standing of Bulgaria and of its active, balanced foreign policy. Our foreign policy priorities — membership of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — are sounder than ever before. For natural cultural reasons, we are committed to the concept of *la francophonie*, which embodies not merely a language but a state of mind. I thank all Member States that were good enough to support us in the election.

Bulgaria will shoulder the full responsibility of non-permanent membership of the Security Council. We are ready to participate in dialogue on the full range of items related to the maintenance of international peace and security. My country is open to dialogue with all States Members of the Organization and to ideas and suggestions aimed at enhancing the role and effectiveness of the United Nations.

I wish here to speak of the positive part the Republic of Bulgaria plays as an important actor for peace and security in South-Eastern Europe and for stability in the settlement of crises in the Eastern Balkans, an area that borders on Bulgaria. We favour full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), and we consider that the 17 November elections in Kosovo will be decisive for the process of stabilization and democratization there. Similarly, Bulgaria attaches high importance to ensuring the stability of the Republic of Macedonia through the implementation of the 13 August 2001 Framework Agreement and to guaranteeing its sovereignty and territorial integrity. My country supports full implementation of the Dayton Accords and the consolidation of the united State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In our view, democratization in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is a positive element. A long-term strategy must be crafted to effect the restoration and economic development of South-Eastern Europe to rebuild it in the wake of the various crises it has experienced. Let me stress that these questions should continue to be the focus of all our efforts to find equitable solutions to conflicts.

*Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

I should like also to highlight Bulgaria's support for the lasting and peaceful settlement of other regional conflicts that are as tragic as those in the Middle East, in Africa and elsewhere, of which there is a long and sad list. Our positions in respect to all of these conflicts are in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and generally recognized principles of international law.

Having myself been an exile for more than 50 years, I am very aware of the human tragedy of refugees, whose number and suffering are continuing to increase, as is the case now in Afghanistan.

We attach great importance to items on the agenda of the United Nations such as the combat against organized crime and corruption and against illegal drug trafficking. That is why our Government is making a particular effort to this end on our own territory. Monitoring trade in weapons and in dual-use goods and technologies is highly relevant, given the linkage between this kind of trade and terrorism.

Let me add that Bulgaria is participating actively in cooperation efforts in the economic and social field and in the areas of human rights, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, global disarmament and the protection of the environment. These objectives are consonant with those of the new Bulgarian Government: to ensure that the social needs of Bulgarian citizens are met, and to bring about durable economic growth, despite the sometimes difficult international economic situation.

The attitude of the Republic of Bulgaria vis-à-vis its increased responsibilities within this world Organization will be based on a clear, logical and consistent foreign policy, with an emphasis on regional security, development and broadening the circle of friendly States, and on making a contribution to the resolution of global problems through its active participation in multilateral dialogue. Solutions to conflicts must be found here, at the United Nations — not on the battlefield.

In conclusion, we believe that this policy will meet with the understanding and support of all of the Members of the United Nations.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the

Republic of Bulgaria for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**The Acting President**: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Miguel Alemán, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama.

**Mr. Alemán** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Panama welcomes with particular pleasure the election of Mr. Han Seung-soo as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and wishes to assure him of our fullest cooperation in the sensitive work with which he is entrusted. It is also a pleasure for us to express the deep satisfaction of the Government of Panama at the well-deserved honour of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize jointly to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the Organization itself.

As we participate today in this forum, we are still reeling from the impact of the terrifying terrorist acts carried out on 11 September in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. These crimes against humanity will never be forgotten, and, as a tribute to the thousands of innocent victims of these senseless attacks, the United Nations must take whatever measures are necessary to legitimize any multilateral action that will have to be taken in future to neutralize the threat of international terrorism.

The Republic of Panama, as a State Member of the United Nations, fully respects the mandates issued by the Organization, and, therefore, we are pleased to state here unambiguously that every resource available to us has been directed to fulfil our responsibilities in the war against terrorism.

Similarly, we support the Security Council Committee set up under resolution 1373 (2001), chaired by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Sir Jeremy Greenstock. We propose to remain in communication with him on an ongoing basis.

The Government of Panama, under the leadership of President Mireya Moscoso, is prepared vigorously to implement the provisions contained in all United Nations instruments on international terrorism. To that end, we will soon submit to our Legislative Assembly the four United Nations instruments that have not yet been ratified by our country, together with the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of December 1999, which we have just signed here. Likewise, we will ratify, as soon as possible, the Rome Statute creating the International Criminal Court.

In parallel with the joint actions taken against terrorism in conformity with the many relevant United Nations Conventions and resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, and in order to address terrorist activities, we respectfully appeal to all to set aside any differences that may have arisen in July in respect of the problem of massive illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. It is well known that the ultimate beneficiaries of this deadly traffic are not only rebel movements — sometimes sponsored by other nations — but also notorious terrorist groups. That is why Panama reiterates the position it maintained during the Conference: that no State has the right to promote this deadly traffic by claiming its own national interests are at stake. This issue must be re-examined in the light of recent events.

The Republic of Panama is particularly concerned at the social, political and economic implications of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and wishes to declare its commitment to promoting an American convention on this question, with a view to creating a legal framework that will enable the countries of the hemisphere to completely suppress this traffic and thus strengthen regional security.

We are caught up in a vortex of bloodshed that brings us ever closer to generalized conflagrations. The States represented here, when we became Members of this Organization, undertook formally to promote peace and human rights; to meet the food, health care and educational needs of our peoples; to preserve the environment; and to bring about overall social, economic and political development.

However, for this commitment to have a real effect, we must secure the support of those States that, due to pure fanaticism, particularly in the Middle East, have not been able to come to terms with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. My country believes that the intolerance and intransigence demonstrated in that part of the world are the result of ancient ways of thinking and injustices that can be easily discerned and which constitute flagrant violations of the United Nations Charter. The Republic

of Panama has repeatedly urged the parties in conflict to renounce the use of force, re-establish cooperation on security and adopt measures to restore mutual trust, which enable a return to the peace process based on the norms of international law.

In recent days, the international community has witnessed with deep sadness the intensification of violence in that region. Because of the brutality occurring in the Middle East, Panama considers that it is the responsibility of the United Nations to vigorously strengthen its mediating role in order to put an end to the unfortunate bloodshed that has grieved the international community for decades.

In particular, Panama calls on the Security Council to assume a more active role in the efforts to apply the recommendations of the Mitchell report, which proposes using constructive dialogue and mutual concessions to move beyond the violence. An indispensable step is recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to create a sovereign State and the right of the State of Israel to live in peace and security.

We must make our best effort, employ our most outstanding human resources and put ourselves to the task of reconciling all humankind. The Republic of Panama will persist in this task and will always advocate peaceful solutions to conflicts through dialogue and the rejection of violence as the means to resolve internal or international disputes.

Other examples of situations that cause unnecessary friction and that could be resolved through dialogue are the issues of the Saharan people's right to self-determination, the Argentine Republic's claim to the Falkland Islands, and the representation of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the United Nations system while the internal situation of that fraternal people is being resolved.

Panama defends human rights without reservation and will never accept acts which violate them, wherever the violations occur and whatever the circumstances used to try to justify those violations.

Let us add to this very clear position of ours our sincere commitment to the universal campaign for the rights of the child and to the fight against HIV/AIDS, as these are an essential part of human rights. On this latter issue, Panama considers that the key to any future success lies in everyone's acceptance of their economic and social responsibilities with respect to this terrible disease and in developing good community planning at the local and provincial levels to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Human rights are clearly defined in the political and civil spheres as much as in the economic, social and cultural spheres. Since the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948, much progress has been made. However, the principles proclaimed on that occasion are being challenged by the inequalities of globalization and financing for development, by unpayable foreign debts and by the indiscriminate destruction of the environment. All these factors of extreme poverty require acts of profound solidarity on behalf of the richer nations. We firmly believe that the eradication of poverty and inequality will prevent the erosion of human rights and halt the social upheavals that generate violence and cause the loss of the political, social and economic rights of the citizens of the world.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, was a tremendous effort towards sustainable world development. The most important outcome of the Conference was the adoption of Agenda 21, which covers in depth the topics of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and the progressive deterioration of ecosystems. Agenda 21 also encourages us to focus our attention on the financial resources required to promote sustainable development at the national level, with the goal of creating a corresponding measurement system for it that can be easily interpreted. This is an ongoing and important task that we cannot neglect.

The United Nations Conference on Financing for Development will be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002. We believe that the Conference offers a magnificent opportunity to reduce the abyss between the rich countries of the North and the poor countries of the South in both the practical and conceptual aspects of this issue.

In the course of last month's meetings of the Conference's Preparatory Committee, opinions with substantial differences were expressed, and these must be reconciled. As a result of these disagreements, there have been pessimistic predictions that it will be impossible to formulate a plan of action at Monterrey. I believe, on the contrary, that since we already know the objections that will be made by those who assume the

risks of financing, we cannot delay revising our arguments, in order — creatively and responsibly — to define parameters for financing for development that are more in tune with the realities of today's world.

The current realities are pressing and encompass, among other things, the need to provide financing at discounted rates to developing countries; to vigorously attack the problem of foreign debt; to design measures to raise the depressed prices of our raw materials and other export products; and to agree collectively on mechanisms to prevent financial crises.

Following this line of thought, and because we consider it of interest to the General Assembly, we will mention that in June of this year the Central American countries and the United States signed a joint declaration under the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America (ALIDES). This alliance is a regional strategy to make the Central American isthmus a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development. Its general objectives include the sustainable management of biodiversity, the strengthening and modernization of institutional structures, the promotion of trade and the mitigation of natural disasters.

Specifically, ALIDES works for regional economic integration and the region's integration in the international economy; the harmonization of macroeconomic policies and the modernization of infrastructure in the areas of energy, transportation and telecommunications; the creation of protected biological corridors, river basins and other areas; the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law in the region; the improvement of the levels of education, health and security of the population of Central America; and the restoration and preservation of national values.

Central America's desire for development has been strengthened by the launching of the Puebla-Panama Plan. We created for the region a mechanism for ongoing and permanent consultation to perfect an integral strategy for long-term development.

While we are making great efforts to mitigate the social problems that afflict us in some regions, in the United Nations we continue to debate structural problems that limit to some extent the ability of many of our countries to have an effect on the administration of the Organization. Among the different debates relating to United Nations reform, we would like to refer to the one held on 30 October on agenda item 49, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". Last year the delegation of Panama, both at the Millennium Summit and the General Assembly, supported the aspiration of many years to bring about the reform of the Security Council.

We have said — and we wish to repeat today — that we agree it must have a more equitable and more representative composition, but in order to achieve this fundamental objective it is indispensable that the permanent members accept that the power structure of 1945 has ceased to exist. Now, looking at the new and vital interdependence of all nations around the world, we see a genuine opportunity opening before us to get rid of the obsessions that no longer suit the structure of our Organization.

In conclusion, we would like to restate our conviction that, as we have seen after the horrendous terrorist acts of 11 September, the legitimacy and effectiveness of future Security Council actions will depend on all Member States feeling the absence of unilateral measures and of the usual marginalization in decision-making on matters affecting all of us. It is in this direction that we should guide our work.

**The Acting President**: I now call on His Excellency the Honourable Motsoahae Thomas Thabane, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lesotho.

**Mr. Thabane** (Lesotho): On behalf of the delegation of Lesotho, allow me, through you, Sir, to congratulate the President and other members of the Bureau on their election to office during this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Allow me also to pay a well deserved tribute to Mr. Harri Holkeri, President of the fifty-fifth session, and to commend him for spearheading efforts to reform and revitalize the General Assembly, with a view to strengthening its role as the chief deliberative policy-making and representative body of the United Nations.

We congratulate our Secretary-General for winning the Nobel Peace Prize and for his reappointment as head of the Organization. This will no doubt enable him to continue his efforts to make the United Nations more relevant in facing today's challenges. We commend him for continuing to place such a high premium on the need for the Organization to develop better tools for conflict prevention, management and resolution and encourage him to

continue developing concepts and strategic frameworks for the Organization's activities in the areas of conflict prevention and peace-building.

We particularly wish to commend the Secretary-General for his relentless efforts and commitment to reforming and transforming the United Nations into a functioning Organization with a new management culture. We reiterate the view shared by many in this Assembly that the United Nations would be more democratic if the Security Council were made more representative of the membership as a whole. Regrettably, while we all agree on the need for reform, agreement on the details for such reform continues to elude us.

Lesotho reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of the barbaric acts of terror committed against innocent civilians on 11 September and extends its condolences to the relatives of all those who perished during the attacks. Ideological or other differences are no excuse for such unspeakable acts; neither can such evil acts be justified on the grounds of expediency. Those responsible for these acts must be punished. While we support the international coalition against terrorism and consider ourselves part thereof, we nevertheless stress the need for capacity-building to enable all countries effectively to play their part in combating this menace.

One year after the unprecedented Millennium Summit is now a good time for us to reflect and take stock of how we are responding to the challenges and changes brought about by our ever growing interdependence and the ever-increasing interconnectedness of our economies. In this changing world in which all forms of economic, social, cultural and political activity have become dependent on access to telecommunications and information services provided by the global information infrastructure, what progress have we made towards making globalization truly global and ensuring that people everywhere share in its benefits?

The truth of the matter is that there remains a gaping digital chasm between the industrialized and the developing countries, especially in Africa where the majority of the people are yet to reap the benefits of information and communications technology. Much still needs to be done to jump-start the introduction of information and communications technology in primary schools in order to enable the developing countries to respond to the changing needs of society and the economy.

The United Nations system thus has to redouble its efforts in assisting developing countries, particularly in Africa, in building their capacity in curriculum development to ensure improvements in the quality of education and access to information and communications technology, including through the transfer of technology. We thus call upon all international partners to treat information and communications technology as a special priority for Africa's development.

Despite the many difficulties that the developing countries continue to face in addressing their urgent development needs, solid progress is being made towards establishing strong institutional capacities for sustainable development, including a sound macroeconomic foundation, effective governance, peace and stability. Following many years of undemocratic military dictatorships and coups d'état in Africa, the continent has begun to take bold steps to climb out of the rut, and today strong winds of democracy continue to reverberate throughout. This deepening of democratic principles has led Africans to shun all leaders who come to power through extra-constitutional means. There is also a growing awareness within Africa that sustainable development cannot take place in the midst of actual or potential conflict and that armed conflict is retrogressive and inevitably destroys the achievements of many years of national development; hence, conflict management is now assuming greater importance in Africa.

Development is also beginning to take firm roots as many African countries formulate their development strategies and pursue greater cooperative relations with their development partners. The key role played by the United Nations in helping to re-energize the momentum for international partnership between, in particular, the least developed countries and the international community will remain crucial for addressing poverty and sustainable development.

Africa is not only determined to overcome its problems, but it is also determined to ensure that the future development of the continent is shaped and designed by Africans themselves. Many of the evils that have continued to plague Africa, including economic decline, internal unrest and civil wars, uncertainty, corruption and disintegration of States,

have been major obstacles to the development and establishment of viable societies in Africa. All this has made us realize that the only way to achieve sustainable development for the continent is to ensure that people live and work in stable conditions under the rule of law. Transforming the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union should thus be seen as an important step that will pave the way for the establishment of strong institutions endowed with necessary powers and resources to enable them to discharge their duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

It is against this background that the launching of the New African Initiative in Lusaka in July was also a turning point in Africa's efforts aimed at ensuring that appropriate Africa-wide and regional economic and social reforms are carried out with a view to eradicating all social injustices. This African-owned and African-led economy-centred recovery programme and framework for action is a pragmatic vision of how Africa wishes to be included as a partner and not as a recipient of the benefits and opportunities offered by globalization. This initiative by Africans, which sets out the right priorities and focal points for the sustainable development of the African continent, deserves not only commendation, but also support from this Assembly and the international community as a whole.

In embarking on this new path to recovery, Africans have no illusions. They are fully aware of the mammoth task that they have set for themselves and believe that progress towards achieving it will have to be driven by the people and Governments of Africa themselves. We will have to create the necessary conditions to allow the poor to become agents of change, using their own talents and capacities to raise their production and increase their income.

For all that to happen, Africa needs resources. The international community must provide support not only through development cooperation, but also through improved trade access for African countries to the markets of the developed world. The "Everything but Arms" initiative adopted by the European Council of Ministers in February is a first important step towards scrapping customs duties on imports from Africa and other developing countries, and needs to be emulated. We express our gratitude for the support and commitment already given to this initiative by the G-8 and the European Union and call upon other donor countries and agencies to join Africa as it embarks on its new path of recovery. In the same vein, we acknowledge the benefits that the African Growth and Opportunity Act holds for sub-Saharan African countries.

The Millennium Summit reaffirmed the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development goal of reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. Despite that, abject poverty, a narrow resource base and, hence, broad dependence on overseas development aid, unsustainable levels of debt and the deleterious effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic continue to be part of everyday reality for the majority of the people in the world. In some regions of sub-Saharan Africa poverty has actually increased, posing a serious threat to democratic governance processes through the erosion of human rights and human dignity, as well as the deterioration of the already narrow natural resource base. In addition, the number of least developed countries has more than doubled since 1971, when the United Nations set up that category of countries.

A more rapid and sustainable exit from debt is thus imperative. This calls for urgent implementation of an enhanced and expanded Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative (HIPC). It further calls for more comprehensive measures, including converting the remaining bilateral debts of the least developed countries into grants, widening HIPC to benefit more countries, increasing the levels of official development assistance, ensuring markets for the products of least developed countries and encouraging greater volumes of foreign direct investment to Africa.

Lesotho therefore looks forward to further discussion of these measures during the coming International Conference on Financing for Development, the convening of which we fully support. We also believe that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 is a benchmark framework for accelerating the sustained economic growth and sustainable development of the poorest and weakest segment of the international community.

Housing remains a critical pillar of sustainable economic development. It is the single most important and obvious indicator of individual aspirations and their fulfilment. Testimony to this is the renewal of our commitment, earlier this year, to the principles of the

Habitat Agenda, which are encapsulated in the ideas of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements for development. Poverty continues to be a major factor for developing countries' failure to realize these twin goals of the Habitat Agenda.

In the same vein, a healthy population is an absolute requirement for social and economic development. We thus recognize the enormous challenges posed by HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. For Africa, which is host to 70 per cent of the people infected with HIV/AIDS worldwide, this scourge is reversing hard-won gains in economic and social development. Political commitment and leadership are therefore essential for building national capacities to develop and implement comprehensive national strategies for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, support and treatment, all of which require mobilization of resources. We therefore welcome the outcome of the special session on HIV/AIDS held during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and hope that the Global AIDS and Health Fund announced by the Secretary-General will soon become operational to provide funding on a grant basis to the most affected countries.

Lesotho welcomes the global movement to ensure that every child enjoys a better beginning, and hence a better future, and has undertaken to renew its commitment to ensure the rights of children. Our most auspicious endeavour to that end was the progressive introduction, in the year 2000, of free primary education beginning with standard 1 pupils. We believe that this is a step forward in ensuring sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. The new agreed dates for the postponed children's summit should ensure that we do not lose the momentum for creating a better world for children.

Lesotho also remains keenly aware of the important role that women play in the advancement of the nation's social and economic development processes, as well as of the need to sustain their involvement and participation at all levels. To that end, we have heeded the call to States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women that have entered reservations to the Convention to review those reservations. Our own reservation to the Convention has been amended with a view to withdrawing it at a later stage.

The events in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as the gruesome images of women and children whose limbs were hacked off by rebel forces in Sierra Leone, have shown that accountability for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and universal jurisdiction over those crimes, are key to bringing an end to the cycle of impunity that we have witnessed over the years. Lesotho's tangible contribution towards ending the culture of impunity is demonstrated by its support and assistance to the activities of the International Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda aimed at bringing those responsible for the most egregious crimes to justice, as well as its support for the creation of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, for which Lesotho has pledged $100,000 over three years. The first payment of $40,000 in respect of the first year has already been deposited. We call on the international community to provide adequate funding in order that the Special Court for Sierra Leone may come into operation.

While the pace of ratifications for the Statute of the International Criminal Court is encouraging, more needs to be done if that Court is to become a reality soon. Adequate time and resources should therefore be made available for the Preparatory Commission to fulfil its mandate within the first half of 2002.

International peace and security continue to be a major challenge for the United Nations in the twenty-first century. While some positive developments have been recorded on various issues that are critical to the security of the international community, much more still needs to be done in pursuit of a more peaceful world — a world free from weapons of mass destruction; a world free from the arsenals of illicit small arms and light weapons; and a world with strengthened global norms for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

We renew our call to those who remain outside the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to join the Treaty, and urge the nuclear-weapon States to continue full compliance with obligations assumed under the Treaty.

The recent spate of biowarfare threats have also heightened the urgent need to devise effective compliance measures that will make the proliferation of biological weapons much harder and prevent such weapons from falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

The historic United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has succeeded in highlighting the human suffering and insecurity engendered by the excessive accumulation and illicit transfer of those weapons. Though not fully satisfactory, particularly to those of us who have suffered most from this scourge, the measures envisaged in the Programme of Action are a historic first step towards curbing this menace. It is now up to all of us to forge meaningful partnerships to ensure effective implementation of the Programme as we move together to free the world of these weapons.

While peace has continued to hold in many regions of the world, Africa has experienced setbacks in that regard, as violent conflicts have continued unabated. The sad legacy of our colonial past, wherein State-sponsored activities facilitated the systematic plunder of Africa's resources, have been replaced by foreign companies and individuals in pursuit of the so-called bottom line, whose sole motive is the maximization of profit. The link between conflicts, the easy availability of arms, an abundance of natural resources and the greed of these individuals have totally devalued African lives. In other words, the worth of African lives in the year 2001 is much the same as during the time of slavery in the nineteenth century. We call upon the same collective conscience of the international community that condemned and succeeded in eradicating slavery to speak with equal vehemence against this evil in our time.

The volatile and explosive situation in the Middle East remains highly regrettable. Lesotho supports the creation of an independent Palestinian State on the basis of Security Council resolutions, a State that should coexist in peace with its neighbours.

We call on all parties to conflicts around the world to intensify efforts to create conditions conducive to the implementation of the agreements reached and relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as to the effective engagement of the United Nations. We are encouraged by the developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Sierra Leone, and applaud the efforts of all parties to bring peace to their countries.

We are, however, saddened by the lack of progress in the implementation of agreements relating to the settlement, once and for all, of two of the largest running conflicts, in Angola and the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. We in Lesotho are convinced that the Houston accords remain the foundation for self-determination in the latter, while, undoubtedly, the Lusaka Protocol on Angola remains the only viable basis for peace in that sisterly country.

In conclusion, Lesotho renews its commitment to multilateral cooperation and the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The current difficult times call for the strong support of the United Nations and the multilateral processes if the Organization is to effectively address the new global issues and challenges that confront it.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Agba Otikpo Mezode, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic.

**Mr. Mezode** (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of the Central African Republic would like first of all to fulfil the task entrusted to it by His Excellency Mr. Ange-Félix Patassé, President of the Republic and head of State, of expressing the solidarity of the Central African Republic with the American people, as well as its resolute condemnation of the heinous acts committed against freedom, democracy and peace on 11 September. We will certainly make our contribution to the process of reflection that the international community will undertake together throughout this session to elaborate measures aimed at the eradication of terrorism.

Before proceeding, I should like warmly to congratulate Mr. Han on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session, as well as the other members of the Bureau. His expertise in international affairs, together with his wisdom, will guarantee the success of our work, and the delegation of the Central African Republic would like to assure him of its cooperation. My delegation greatly appreciated the skilful way in which his predecessor conducted the work of the Millennium Assembly.

We would also like to address, on behalf of the Central African Republic, our warmest congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election as Secretary-General. He has been honoured for his commitment to the cause of the Organization by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, which is a tribute both to him and to the United Nations as a whole. He can continue to count upon the cooperation of the Central African Republic in the fulfilment of his extremely difficult

mission, in the wake of last year's adoption by Member States of the Millennium Declaration, which establishes a new framework for cooperation between States.

Indeed, the Millennium Declaration must be viewed as a strategy within which States should work so as to be able meet the many challenges facing the world today, which include poverty, conflict, intolerance, terrorism, debt, marginalization, endemic disease and HIV/AIDS. These growing challenges, the persistence of which leads to global imbalance, can be dealt with only through multilateral cooperation, above all in the framework of the United Nations.

Such cooperation must first of all aim to eradicate the causes of certain frustrating problems in the world, by, for example, achieving a just and lasting settlement of the question of the Middle East.

Likewise, my delegation urges the parties concerned to implement the provisions of the Lusaka Agreement so that the Democratic Republic of the Congo can regain its territorial integrity and unity and establish a lasting peace, which will be of benefit to the Central African Republic.

Furthermore, States should cooperate in support of Africa, which is currently burdened by the weight of numerous challenges. The Millennium Summit rightly committed the international community to a campaign for development cooperation so as to make the right to development, like human rights, a reality for all.

The Central African Republic, which endorsed the Millennium Declaration, urges the countries of the North to establish a true partnership with Africa, at both the public and private level, so as to support the developmental efforts of the continent. This will require a degree of political will, since, given the conflicts that are taking place today between, and often within, States, our partners sometimes give in to despair and indifference when confronted with slow progress, or occasionally allow themselves to be swayed by emotions incited by certain people who wish to discourage initiatives by abusively manipulating ideas that promote genocide and ethnic cleansing — phenomena that some countries have recently endured, but that can gain no foothold today in a country such as the Central African Republic.

We often forget that the deep-seated sources of such conflicts are the lack of a culture of democracy in our societies and extreme poverty. That is why our partners should support our efforts to achieve democratization and contribute to consolidating the foundations of our young democracies, above all by paying priority attention to the economic aspect, which, unfortunately, is not always the case.

In the case of the Central African Republic, for example, on 28 May last an attempted coup took place with the aim of ending the march of democracy in the country. That was the fourth such attempt in the five years since 1996. We would like briefly to shed some light on those events.

At its 4261st meeting, on 23 January 2001, the Security Council considered the situation in the Central African Republic. While noting certain shortcomings, the Council recognized the efforts of the Government and asked it, along with representatives of all parts of society in the Central African Republic, to continue down the path towards the consolidation of democracy and the preservation of peace. To help in that task, the mandate of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) has been extended because, with the assistance of others, it is doing remarkable and productive work.

Despite everything, the Central African Republic is determined to continue resolutely to be a small haven of relative stability in a region torn apart by war, as one eminent personality put it recently. The social and political tension has, indeed, begun to diminish. Since May 2001, there has been an international presence.

Contrary to all expectations, the same groups that have repeatedly subjected the people of the Central African Republic to acts of terrorism for five years committed an act whose foreseeable and tragic consequences are well known. When condemned by both the national and international community, those groups rushed to hide behind claims of genocidal practices in an attempt to justify the unjustifiable, thus creating ethnic division in various parts of the country.

This recurrence of violent crises raises questions about justice in our young States, which are trying to establish the rule of law, but where amnesties are granted in lieu of justice, allowing impunity to prevail and thus encouraging recidivism.

Fortunately, the world has spoken out in condemnation of the most recent coup attempt, and we

would like to take this opportunity, from this rostrum, to thank the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Community of Sahel Saharan States, as well as brotherly and friendly countries, which responded immediately, calling for the re-establishment of constitutional legality.

Any coup, be it failed or successful, always gives rise to actions to undermine freedom, human rights, the rights of society and national rights. The Central African Republic did not want to play that game. Thus, a number of appropriate measures have been taken, including the creation of a joint judicial inquiry commission; the establishment of contacts among the various social sectors and with the chancelleries, organizations and accredited institutions in the Central African Republic at the governmental and presidential levels; and diplomatic activity with the countries of the subregion and the region, which are being pursued.

However, beyond the attempted coup of 28 May, the entire situation in the Central African Republic must be assessed as a whole. Just recently, having refused to present himself to the commission of judicial inquiry that had been established specifically to determine the consequences of the attempted coup of 28 May, the former army Chief of Staff organized resistance that threatened to turn into a rebellion and almost plunged the country into renewed tragedy. The rapid reaction of the Organization of African Unity, the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States and neighbouring brotherly countries has certainly helped to calm the situation for the moment.

All these events, sorely trying to men of good will, have again highlighted the question of the march of democracy in the Central African Republic. That march has been made even more difficult by the nation's extreme poverty and fragility, which, because of enormous financial hardships, is unable to cover the costs of sovereignty, creating a veritable breeding ground of instability. The attempted coup on 28 May exacerbated the country's situation by plunging it into tragic destitution.

This situation has been clearly grasped by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which, on 2 August, reminded its member States, for their information and possible action, of the decision on the situation in the Central African Republic, adopted at the seventy-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers in Lusaka, which

> "Appeals to Member States and the rest of the international community to provide the necessary economic and financial assistance for the reconstruction of the Central African Republic and in particular calls on the countries which have promised to provide funds at the Pledging Conference in favour of the Central African Republic in New York in May 2000 to honour their commitments." (*CM/Dec.602 (LXXIV), para. 4*)

The Central African Republic thanks the OAU for that decision. We also wish here to express our gratitude to the Security Council, which has always shown great interest in the situation in our country. We further wish to make special mention here of Gabon, France and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as the friends of the Central African Republic represented here, for their firm involvement at the side of the Central African Republic. We hope that they will not despair over these repeated crises because, in spite of everything, we in the Central African Republic are truly determined to overcome our problems.

We therefore hope that the United Nations will advocate even more energetically the cause of our country before the various international financial institutions with a view to securing greater assistance for us, because the repercussions of the series of events that began in 1996 will require significant financial resources to ensure the recovery of the country, the total collapse of which would have an impact throughout our subregion, if not beyond.

We are called upon at this session to consider the manner in which States should implement the Millennium Declaration through their conduct. It is only through cooperation and solidarity that we can achieve this and thus ensure for the world the fulfilment of the objectives set out in the United Nations Charter. This cooperation should also allow us to find the necessary means of meeting the common challenge of terrorism, which is more apparent today than ever before.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to Her Excellency The Honourable Ms. Billie Miller, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados.

**Ms. Miller** (Barbados): I join with other delegations in congratulating Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to chair the proceedings of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I also take this opportunity to express my deep satisfaction at the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and to Secretary-General Kofi Annan. It is a well-deserved vote of confidence in the Secretary-General's leadership as well as recognition of the pivotal role being played by the United Nations in an era of immense challenge for the international community during these early years of the twenty-first century. We are greatly reassured that his firm guidance will continue for a further term to shape the direction of the Organization.

At this time of renewed sadness for the people of New York and of the Dominican Republic, may I also offer my deepest condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives in Monday's tragic crash of American Airlines flight 587.

For all of us, this year's journey to New York to address the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session stands in stark contrast to the comfortable annual routine we have grown to appreciate. We come instead to a city behind barricades, a people traumatized and bewildered, a mood of foreboding and uncertainty on the streets and in these corridors. The horror of terrorism — one that has scarred innocent lives for decades in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland and other parts of Europe, in Asia, in Africa and in Latin America — has now landed on these shores with a fury and intensity that few of us would have thought possible.

*Mr. Deuba (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The Government of Barbados has been explicit and unequivocal in its condemnation of the terrorist attacks of 11 September and has pledged to cooperate fully with the international community in the sustained effort to respond to this global threat. No cause or grievance can ever justify the use of violence as a means of settling disputes or legitimize the taking of innocent lives. The use of terrorism is incompatible with the ideals of the United Nations and cannot be allowed to prevail.

Barbados shares America's grief, for we have lost five proud and hard-working citizens to this senseless carnage. We share America's bewilderment and disbelief, for our citizens, too, have experienced that sense of violation and loss of innocence that comes with an unprecedented terrorist strike. Twenty-five years ago, on 6 October 1976, the unthinkable happened to Barbados with the terrorist downing of a Cubana Airlines flight just outside our territorial waters. Although the masterminds of that attack were identified and apprehended, they were never punished for their crime, but were instead encouraged to remain actively engaged in their campaign of terror. We share America's sense of outrage and determination to bring the perpetrators of the 11 September attacks to justice. We must also insist that there be zero tolerance for terrorism, whatever its source or ideology.

Terrorism is a global problem which requires a global solution. For many years, the United Nations has recognized the threat which terrorism poses to the promotion and maintenance of world peace. Since 1963, when this Organization adopted its first anti-terrorism convention, some 12 related conventions have been approved by the international community. Barbados is a party to seven of these instruments. Earlier this week, I had the honour of signing the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Financing. Our Government is actively reviewing the remaining conventions and their administrative and legislative implications with a view to providing for early adherence.

Barbados is committed to taking all necessary measures to minimize the risk of terrorist acts being perpetrated or financed in or from its national territory. A thorough review of security has been undertaken at our airport and seaport, and our authorities have taken immediate action to ensure compliance with the enhanced International Civil Aviation Organization and Federal Aviation Administration guidelines issued after 11 September. We have also taken legislative action to further strengthen our already well-regulated financial services regime through amendments to the Money Laundering (Prevention and Control) Act and the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act. Within the Caribbean Community we have agreed to increase cooperation in intelligence-gathering, analysis and dissemination among our security and enforcement personnel. We expect shortly to be in a position to report in detail to the Security Council on measures taken in compliance with the terms of resolution 1373 (2001).

Just as we agree that terrorism is a global phenomenon to which no country can consider itself

immune, so too must we understand that it is a complex problem necessitating a multidimensional response. As the Secretary-General has so aptly put it in the 44th meeting, in his opening statement of the general debate:

> "We face two possible futures: a mutually destructive clash between so-called civilizations based on the exaggeration of religious and cultural differences, or a global community, respecting diversity and rooted in universal values. The latter must be our choice, but we can achieve it only if we bring real hope to the billions now trapped in poverty, conflict and disease."

We must all accept that the struggle against terrorism can never hope to succeed if it is viewed simply as a military campaign to strike at the power base of the latest practitioners of terror. It must also seek to find effective and lasting solutions to the problems of underdevelopment, poverty and deprivation, inequality, intolerance and injustice that marginalize so large a percentage of the world's population. For it is from these conditions of hopelessness and despair that spring new converts to the cause of terrorism.

The events of 11 September and the extent to which they have had an impact on the economic fortunes of all of our countries have shown us the other face of globalization: the reality of our growing economic interdependence. Now more than ever, there is a need to recognize the value of multilateralism and the pre-eminent role of the United Nations in the search for lasting solutions to the challenges that will confront us in the early years of the twenty-first century. The importance of giving priority to a revitalized development agenda cannot be overstated.

In this regard, Barbados looks to the International Conference on Financing for Development as a constructive forum for refocusing the dialogue on effective mechanisms for the implementation of the stalled development agenda. We agree there is need to reform the international economic and financial architecture to meet the current development challenges. We are pleased that international tax cooperation will be one of the issues discussed at the Conference.

Many developing countries, including Barbados, were encouraged to diversify into the financial services sector as a viable development alternative and now derive a significant proportion of their national revenue from that source. We therefore continue to insist on the need for universal participation in decisions that affect the operation of this sector.

Barbados is far advanced in the implementation of its national commitments under Agenda 21. We believe that the World Summit on Sustainable Development presents an important opportunity to build a new and expanded relationship with our development partners for the full implementation of commitments already undertaken at Rio. Johannesburg should not merely review the status of progress of Rio, but should also outline strategies for dealing decisively with the sustainable development challenges that have emerged since 1992. For all small island developing States, follow-up of the Barbados Programme of Action will form an integral part of this process.

Naturally, the Caribbean Basin countries will continue their efforts to create a special regime for the Caribbean Sea with the ultimate goal of achieving its recognition as a special area in the context of sustainable development.

It is no secret that the efforts towards the creation of a new international trading system have resulted in bitter disappointment for the majority of developing countries, which have been severely disadvantaged by the imbalance of rights, obligations, benefits and concessions agreed at Uruguay, and by the failure of Seattle to address that imbalance. We hope that the Doha decision to launch a new round will lead to a meaningful resolution of these critical developing country concerns. We are convinced that sustained economic and social progress for the developing world will be achievable only within the framework of a fair, equitable and inclusive trading arrangement that gives due recognition to the differences in size and level of development of Member States.

We welcome the agreement on drug patents, which represents a major victory for the efforts of developing countries to respond to their priority public health needs and is of great significance in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The impact of the 11 September events on the Caribbean has been immediate and severe. The economic repercussions have served to emphasize the extreme fragility and vulnerability of our small States in the international economy. The countries of the

Caribbean Community, whose economies are heavily dependent on tourism and financial services, have joined forces to coordinate a regional emergency response and recovery strategy to mitigate the effects of the crisis.

It is clear, however, that responses at the national and regional levels alone will be inadequate to deal with the magnitude of this unprecedented situation. In the words of the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Right Honourable Owen Arthur:

> "the international financial community has traditionally required developing countries to rely heavily on policy responses to deal with economic crisis. But the situation that we face has not been caused by policy failure, recklessness or financial excesses by developing countries.
>
> "Policy responses without the commitment of real financial resources will therefore not suffice. Barbados therefore stands ready to support a well-conceived response from the international financial community to the crisis at hand."

It is the mission of the United Nations to promote the peaceful coexistence and the political, social and economic welfare of the world's peoples. It is in this context that we must recognize the significance of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and renew our confidence in the capacity of multilateral organizations to resolve differences and promote a sense of shared values. This Conference presented a unique opportunity for countries to take a proactive approach in defusing both historic and contemporary conflicts and in coming to terms with the injustices of the past and creating new understandings for the future.

We regret that in many respects the Conference did not get the serious high-level attention it deserved and that the treatment of its fundamental issues was less wide-ranging and definitive than we would have wished. In the words of Professor Hilary Beckles, of the Barbados delegation:

> "The crisis of modernity that finds expression in spiralling racial hatred, xenophobia and related intolerance is not the sole burden of any one part of the global community, even though the victims of the crimes of which I speak continue to feel in the course of everyday life the kind of pain and anguish not easily imagined by others."

The citizens of the Caribbean are a transplanted people, who have forged from the crucible of slavery, colonialism and economic exploitation a vibrant, pluralistic, multiracial society built on tolerance and respect for ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. In these difficult times, we believe that there is much that can be learned from our experiences and much that can be done to promote the culture of peace and understanding, especially among the youth. In this regard, Barbados attaches importance to the early convening of the General Assembly special session on children and to a rededication of efforts to achieve the international development targets already set.

We would do well to remember that, in the words of the Secretary-General, "none of the issues that faced us on 10 September has become less urgent". Indeed, it would be an unfortunate irony if the global response to terrorism were conducted in such a manner — through the massive redeployment of resources from other priorities, such as the fight against narcotics trafficking, extreme poverty, disease and environmental degradation — as to further exacerbate the economic, political and cultural instabilities which are the primary breeding ground for terrorism.

Small countries like my own are not part of the problem, but we are nevertheless required to be part of the solution, in circumstances that place a disproportionate burden on our financial, human and administrative resources, which had already been struggling to respond to the global economic recession.

Barbados remains fully committed to the United Nations system and to the values it seeks to promote. We are keenly aware of the important work the United Nations continues to carry out in the eastern Caribbean. We are pleased to provide tangible support for that work through the provision of purpose-built headquarters to house the seven agencies whose subregional offices are located in Bridgetown. We will continue to work closely with the agencies in developing a model partnership for eastern Caribbean development.

In this context, we welcome the support of the United Nations Development Programme, in partnership with the International Monetary Fund and the Government of Canada, for the Caribbean Technical Assistance Centre, which was inaugurated

last week in Barbados. We look forward to similar levels of United Nations cooperation for other important programmes, in particular that of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), whose work is providing critical support to the region in an extremely volatile international economic and security environment.

Two years ago, the Prime Minister of Barbados emphasized that we were leaving the twentieth century and entering the twenty-first conscious of the dangers, but excited by the prospects. Recent events must not be allowed to dampen our optimism. We must remain firm in the hope that humanity possesses the fortitude and determination to triumph in the face of extreme adversity, and that respect for diversity, human dignity and the sanctity of human life will prevail.

We are not expected to complete this task, but neither are we at liberty to abstain from it.

**The Acting President**: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Elvin Nimrod, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Grenada.

**Mr. Nimrod** (Grenada): At the outset, my delegation extends profound sympathy to the families of the victims who lost their lives on the flight to the Dominican Republic.

The rescheduled general debate now convened, well into the work of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, only serves to reconfirm our awareness of Mr. Han's great diplomatic and communicative skills. For this, my delegation thanks and congratulates him once again. Under his competent leadership we hope this will be a fruitful and decisive session of the Assembly.

This being my first opportunity, may I take the stand, on behalf of the Government and people of Grenada, to heartily congratulate the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and the United Nations on the designation as recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Just as the fifty-fifth session was the Millennium Assembly of joy, hope and optimism, this fifty-sixth session, by contrast, can be called the unpredictable Assembly of challenge and adversity, from which the international community can nevertheless derive strength and unity in the pursuit of a common enemy who will eventually be found and brought to justice.

The challenge and uncertainty have come about because terrorism now threatens the entire civilized world. The catastrophic and traumatic events of 11 September have changed not only the lives of individuals, for whom we grieve so painfully, but it has also changed the modus vivendi and the modus operandi of our present-day civilization in many respects. If this cloud of hatred and revenge is allowed to prevail, history will long remember that evil triumphed due to inaction.

Thus, the broad international coalition brought together by the United States of America and supported by Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and General Assembly resolution 56/1 stands as a bulwark ready to break the immoral and physical backbone of terrorism. Grenada fully supports and endorses resolution 1373 (2001), which sets out important measures that countries — large and small, rich and poor — must all take together to prevent and combat terrorists in our jurisdictions or wherever they may be found.

The newly formed Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, under the chairmanship of the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, is a welcome and laudable effort in the struggle that deserves the backing and support of all Member States morally, strategically and financially. In addition, it is soliciting assistance from persons with particular skills in the performance of special functions.

The Government of Grenada has already begun to take steps within its jurisdiction to implement measures within our capacity that prevent and suppress the financing of terrorists acts. Our priority to prevent those who finance, plan, facilitate or commit terrorist acts from using Grenada for those purposes against other States or their citizens, as well as to find ways to intensify and accelerate the exchange and sharing of information. Grenada is examining its administrative and other processes with a view to improving efficiency in this regard.

We are active in the global fight against terrorism. Grenada is cooperating with the United States authorities to ensure that there are no terrorist funds in any of our offshore institutions. Further, Grenada has thoroughly examined its economic citizenship programme to ensure that no known terrorists had inadvertently been granted citizenship. We are now confident that no such person is an

economic citizen of Grenada. In light of the changed global environment and our commitment to assist in the fight against terrorism in any way we can, the Government of Grenada has taken the decision to suspend indefinitely the economic citizenship programme.

Moreover, Grenada continues to intensify its participation in regional and international cooperation efforts as we seek to ensure that there are no gaps in the global framework for the fight against this heinous crime. Grenada will reinforce and extend its international cooperation arrangements in the field of justice, policing and law enforcement.

The Government of Grenada fully supports the development of a comprehensive and effective legal framework to combat terrorism. My country has begun a review of international conventions already in place, with a view to signing, ratifying and fully implementing them. Those not yet in effect will be implemented. Some of these conventions are within the United Nations system, while others are of a regional or hemispheric nature. Priority is being given to the existing 12 United Nations international conventions against terrorism — in particular, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

It is necessary for the international community to send a clear and unambiguous signal to terrorists that their philosophy is fundamentally wrong and totally unacceptable. We must stand united in our efforts to combat and eliminate activities aimed at killing innocent people and destroying communities. The Government of Grenada joins the Caribbean Community in pledging our full support of efforts to confront terrorism and restore the rights and freedom of people the world over. My delegation would like to focus for a few moments on the impact that this dastardly act has had nationally, regionally and internationally.

In my country, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, the effect of the global economic turbulence has hit the tourism and aviation sectors hardest. Tourism, the hotel industry and aviation play a synergistic role that is crucial to the economies of most small States in terms of foreign exchange and employment.

The subregion had already begun to feel the effects of the international economic downturn, which caused the deterioration of our fortunes. But it is clear that since the terrorist attacks on the United States of America, Grenada and the other members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) are suffering from further reduction in economic activities. We are now severely challenged.

We are experiencing shortfalls in revenue collection. Our tourism sector is experiencing a drastic reduction in visitor arrivals. Indeed, the International Monetary Fund predicts that arrivals in the Caribbean region could fall short by as much as 50 per cent. Our air and marine transport are also experiencing severe reductions. Regional air carriers have registered as much as a 45 per cent fall in passenger load since 11 September.

The picture looks bleak, but we are determined that our response must prevent the devastation envisioned by the perpetrators of terror. Soon after 11 September, the Prime Minister of Grenada and Chairman of the OECS, The Honourable Dr. Keith Mitchell, convened a meeting of OECS to discuss the impact on tourism and related activities — hotels, banks, agriculture, manufacturing and transportation. The subregional meeting of OECS took a number of decisions that will respond to our economic challenges. One such measure is the formation of the Grenada National Economic Council. This will give effect to the revival of sustainable tourism. It will address fiscal and economic performance, and it will give impetus to productivity. In addition, only recently in the Bahamas, the Caribbean Community heads of Government met and approved an $18 million joint public/private sector emergency tourism promotion programme, demonstrating self-help at its best in the region.

The events of 11 September, with the ensuing economic and geopolitical instability, have propelled us to reorder our priorities. We need to focus on restoring confidence in international economic and multilateral cooperation. As we all know, the member States of the World Trade Organization do not participate on a level playing field. The developing world is still struggling to bridge the economic and social divide in our global community. Some were not in favour of the second round of negotiations. Yet some States were willing to put their differences aside and endeavour to march towards the next stage of economic and multilateral cooperation. This is clearly what we aspire to in this august body.

While concerns about terrorism have dominated the general debate, and rightly so, mention must be made of the unfinished agenda of the last decade of the twentieth century with respect to social and economic development, central to which is the human person.

The following United Nations summit-level conferences, which have been held in the past 10 years, have all stressed sustainable development and the centrality of the human person in the process: the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992; the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993; the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995; the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul in 1996; the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996; the Millennium Summit in 2000; and the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in 2001.

The question is: How much of the outcome of these conferences has been implemented with respect to poverty alleviation, the empowerment of women, health, education, children and the elderly, trade liberalization, economic cooperation, and the sharing and transfer of technology? Could it be that these conferences and special sessions promised more than they could deliver? Promising too much is as bad as doing too little.

The fight against poverty underpins all of those things. To feed the hungry is both a divine and a social imperative. Thus, the international community is particularly concerned that the International Conference on Financing for Development to be held next year in Mexico and the World Summit for Sustainable Development to be held in South Africa, both so important for small States, should yield positive results. The Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States is still a major and unfulfilled component of the process of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and it should be high on the implementation agenda this time around.

For more than 40 years an embargo has existed against a small country in the Caribbean. What this has done is to ostracize the Cuban people and cause them undue hardship. What it has achieved is to make the Cuban people more innovative. The old wounds have healed, the pain has dulled and the cause has diminished. I wish to register Grenada's support for the removal of the United States of America's economic embargo on Cuba. Members will recall that last year 167 Member States voted in favour of the removal of that embargo. Only three voted against and four abstained. That shows the overwhelming position of the international community against those sanctions. Trade, as we know, is important for the development of any people, and with the embargo there is no freedom of trade between Cuba and the United States.

In the wake of the devastation caused in Cuba by hurricane Michelle, it is now critical that steps be taken to remove the embargo and to give the Cuban people a chance to recover from that unstoppable force of nature. The easing of the economic embargo against Cuba could assist in the overall development of that country, a small nation seeking against all odds to maintain a modern, dynamic society in the Caribbean and in Latin America. The lifting of the embargo would augur well for friendly cooperative relations among all the countries of this hemisphere.

Now, I turn to the issue of the Republic of China on Taiwan. Grenada believes that a country that exhibits fortitude and that has moved its economy from poor and underdeveloped to affluent and prosperous deserves recognition. A country that consistently shows international responsibility surely deserves to be admitted to this community of nations. The time has come to reconsider the exclusion of the Republic of China on Taiwan from membership of the United Nations. The Republic of China is home to 23 million people. It is a free and democratic country, and a peace-loving member of the international community. In economic terms, the Republic of China on Taiwan is the seventeenth largest economy in the world, the eighth largest investor in and fourth largest exporter of information technology products, and the third largest holder of foreign reserves. It is preposterous to continue to keep such a country outside the world body.

The Government of Grenada appeals for that wrong to be corrected. We are therefore requesting that the United Nations recognize the natural right of the people of Taiwan to become active participants in this Organization. We believe that the Government and the people of Taiwan are seeking to participate in the United Nations and to contribute constructively to the

international community. Grenada urges that they be given that opportunity and that right.

Grenada, however, notes with satisfaction the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the World Trade Organisation. It is the hope of my delegation that the past, present and future performance of Taiwan as a major democratic and international economic player, although Taiwan is not now a member of the United Nations, will in the not-too-distant future enable it to regain its rightful place in the family of nations.

The United Nations membership must make Article 3 of the Charter a major priority in the next few years. Our founding fathers called for the Organization

> "To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

We must do all in our power to provide added economic opportunities for the developing world. We believe that trade is one avenue to achieve this. I therefore call on the Economic and Social Council actively to pursue undertakings that could create an encouraging atmosphere in which Member States could have the opportunity to raise the standard of living of their peoples. In the current global environment, we must be conscious that inclusion in the processes of the global economy is vital.

Finally, I must recall Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, which calls for the Organization

> "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace."

We must be relentless in our pursuit of the purposes of the Organization. Our challenge is to work towards the elimination of terrorist activities. Our quest must be for economic opportunities for all States. And our goal should be the peaceful coexistence of all peoples of the international community.

**The Acting President**: I now invite His Excellency Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, to take the floor.

**Mr. Simão** (Mozambique): I wish to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo upon his election to preside over the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, and to express my confidence that with his skilful guidance, his leadership and his outstanding experience our deliberations will be crowned with success. Allow me also to pay a special tribute to His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri for the excellent manner in which he conducted the affairs of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I wish him success in his future endeavours.

On behalf of the people and the Government of Mozambique, I would like to extend our congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan on his well-deserved election to the post of Secretary-General for a second term, as well as on having won the Nobel Peace Prize this year. We hail his re-election and the Noble Peace Prize awarded to him and to the United Nations as recognition of his and the Organization's tireless efforts in the search for viable and lasting solutions to the problems facing humanity.

Allow me to express our sympathy to the Government and the people of Algeria with regard to the loss of life and property caused by the recent floods in that sisterly country. Mozambique, having been the victim of terrible floods over two consecutive years, shares the sorrow of the Algerian people.

We also express our condolences to the Government and the people of the United States of America and of the Dominican Republic on the tragedy which resulted from the plane crash last Monday here in New York.

On 11 September, we witnessed the most barbaric terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. We are deeply shocked at the loss of thousands of innocent lives.

We wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to reiterate once again the condolences of the Government and the people of the Republic of Mozambique to the Government and the people of the United States of America on the tragic and unjustifiable deaths of their citizens. We express our sympathy and solidarity with all of the victims and the families that have lost their loved ones.

We reiterate our condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of its origin or place of occurrence, or of the race or religion of those who perpetrate it. Terrorism represents a serious threat to international peace and security as well as to friendly relations among peoples and nations worldwide.

The struggle against this scourge requires concerted action by the whole international community, within the framework of the United Nations, for the target of this evil is not a single nation or people but humankind as a whole.

It is therefore crucial that all United Nations Member States work together towards signing and ratifying all of the conventions and protocols related to the eradication of this enemy of humanity. These conventions represent the legal foundation upon which we can build our collective action against international terrorism.

The work that is under way for the elaboration of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism constitutes a further effort to reinforce the international community's resolve to face the challenge of eliminating the scourge of terrorism.

Mozambique came about as the result of the exercise by Mozambicans of their inalienable right to self-determination. Therefore, Mozambicans know well from their own experience what terrorism is all about. But they are also aware of the distinction between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples for their freedom and independence.

Mozambique is ready to participate in a global discussion on this issue, as an important and useful initiative to formulate a joint organized response to international terrorism, so that the targets of our common struggle against terrorism are clearly defined.

Conscious of the need for the effective implementation of national measures to combat terrorism as a way to complement the international legal regime, Mozambique has already initiated a comprehensive review of international legal instruments to combat and eliminate terrorism, with a view to ratifying and adhering to them.

In this context, Mozambique signed, on 11 November, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. However, it is clear to us that, for an effective implementation of this and other legal instruments, Mozambique needs support from the international community to strengthen its institutions -- namely the police, the judiciary, the financial system and the State prosecutor's office.

Last year, our heads of State and Government met here during the Millennium Summit to reaffirm their faith in the United Nations and in its Charter as indispensable foundations for a just, peaceful and more prosperous world.

The leaders set specific targets to halve the proportion of people who live in extreme poverty, to provide clean water and basic education for all, to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and to achieve other development goals. They called for the strengthening of United Nations peace operations so that vulnerable communities can count on them in their hour of need. They committed themselves to fighting injustice and inequality, terror and crime, and to meeting the special needs of Africa. In order to achieve these lofty goals, all Member States should display political will and the determination to turn these commitments into concrete actions at the international, regional and national levels.

The holding by the United Nations of the special sessions of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and on Habitat, the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance represent bold steps towards resolving the various problems affecting humanity and constitute concrete steps in the implementation of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration.

Mozambique is proud of having played an active role in contributing to the promising outcome of the United Nations Conference on small arms and light weapons. We are confident that the commitments assumed at that Conference will contribute decisively towards preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in, and proliferation of, small arms and light weapons.

We should continuously and critically assess the progress made in each area of commitment, with a view to translating into reality the aspirations and needs of our peoples. Each subsequent session of the General Assembly should be used to assess the degree of progress made in the implementation of the declared commitment towards specific targets. To this end, we

should ensure that follow-up mechanisms are put in place and effectively enhanced for the successful implementation of the plans of action adopted.

As we take on the daunting task of pursuing the goals of the Millennium Summit, we need to work together in a spirit of partnership and cooperation.

Today we are living in a world in which a few countries are reaping the benefits of globalization, while the majority, particularly in Africa, are increasingly being marginalized by the global economy. Consequently, these increasing inequalities and asymmetries aggravate poverty, fuel conflicts and threaten international security, stability, democracy and peace.

To reverse this negative trend, we call upon all developed countries to fulfil their commitment with regard to official development assistance, increase the levels of foreign direct investment in poor countries, and to cancel the external debt of the heavily indebted poor countries.

It is disturbing to note that in Africa 340 million people — half of the population of the continent — live on less than $1 per day. The mortality rate for children under five years of age is about 140 per 1,000, and life expectancy at birth is only 54 years. Only 58 per cent of the population has access to safe water; the rate of illiteracy for people over 15 is 41 per cent; and there are only 18 main telephone lines per 1,000 people in Africa, compared with 145 for the world as a whole and 567 for high-income economies.

This appalling situation requires a strong and clear commitment on the part of us all — Africans first and foremost — the international community and other relevant stakeholders.

The establishment of the African Union during the thirty-seventh Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of the African Unity is recognition that only by pooling our efforts can we find effective solutions to problems affecting the continent. This effort deserves the support of the international community, so that a solid union and strong integration can become a reality in Africa.

The New Partnership for African Development is an initiative aimed at setting an agenda for the renewal of the continent, based on national and regional priorities and on development plans prepared through a participatory process. It foresees a new framework of interaction with the rest of the world, including the industrialized countries and multilateral organizations. The encouragement given by the G-8 Summit and other multilateral institutions in Genoa, Italy, last July is much appreciated.

We are also encouraged by the commitment assumed by ministers and heads of delegations at the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council held in Geneva last July, in welcoming the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and calling on the United Nations system and the international community to support it. The invitation extended by the Council to the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to ensure an effective and coordinated response of the United Nations system is a good course of action aimed at promoting sustainable development and active participation of Africa in the world economy. The African leadership and ownership of the NEPAD must be guaranteed during its implementation.

Conflicts are one of the main obstacles to development, particularly in Africa. In order to find durable solutions to conflicts, we need to focus our actions on prevention measures and address the root causes of conflict. In this regard, prevention should be aimed at addressing, inter alia, poverty, governance, human rights abuses, hunger, endemic diseases and underdevelopment. The success of this action requires national ownership based on partnership between the Government and civil society.

Beyond the preventive measures, we should also think how we can effectively implement sound strategies for conflict resolution and management. The comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects contained in the Brahimi report provides sound recommendations to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping. It emphasizes the need for effective command and control structures, enhanced levels of interoperability, as well as the importance of training troops to understand and operate with more robust rules of engagement. We believe that the recommendations contained in the report will be effective if more resources are allocated to peacekeeping activities, particularly in Africa, and if the response to actual conflicts are timely, so as to avoid the application of double standards.

Initiatives undertaken by regions and subregions aimed at conflict prevention, management and

resolution should be supported and endowed with the resources they need to build their capacity to act effectively. The Organization of African Unity Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution should be enhanced and consolidated to better give appropriate and timely responses to conflicts affecting Africa.

The international community should continue to assist Africa in searching for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, particularly in Sierra Leone and Somalia, as well as in Western Sahara, when a United Nations plan has been agreed to by all parties to the conflict.

It is worth noting that within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) we are strongly engaged in activities aimed at tackling conflicts affecting the region. As the current chair of the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security, Mozambique, in close cooperation with the other member States, will spare no efforts to promote peace and security, through conflict prevention and resolution.

SADC will continue to work with the United Nations and all cooperating partners to bring about lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and in other conflicts on the continent. The partnership between SADC and the United Nations should be continuously maintained and nurtured in the spirit of the Brahimi report.

As the chair of the Community of the Portuguese-Speaking Countries, Mozambique is also engaged in the current efforts to bring about lasting solutions to the problems still affecting some of Community's member States. The Community is happy to welcome East Timor, which will proclaim its independence in May 2002 as a result of our joint, concerted efforts with the East Timorese people.

We are committed to the efforts made by SADC members to eradicate poverty, combat HIV/AIDS and better respond to challenges posed by globalization, as a way to prevent conflicts. We are also supportive of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan within SADC, which aims at boosting the region's development agenda for the coming decade.

Political dialogue, consensus building, partnership and cooperation are a must and should be pursued vigorously. We believe that the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting in Doha, the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development provide unique opportunities to collectively produce an integrated and effective mechanism for the eradication of poverty and the overall implementation of the development goals set out in the Millennium Declaration and in the plan of action for the Least Developed Countries.

It is our expectation that the Monterrey Conference will be instrumental in reshaping the world economic order, giving it more equity and fairness. To that end, the Conference must resolutely address the steady decline of official development assistance and foreign direct investment, untie development aid (as already done by the United Kingdom, which we salute), reform the international financial architecture and provide a sustainable solution to the debt crisis through broad, deep and faster debt relief mechanisms, including total debt cancellation for least developed countries.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development should allow us to assess the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as devising appropriate strategies to further pursue this daunting challenge. In Johannesburg, we should strive to ensure the right balance between environmental protection and socio-economic development, while making poverty eradication our highest priority and fully reinstating the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. This is perfectly consistent with the Rio spirit embodied in Agenda 21, a blueprint that should be absolutely endorsed; we should avoid any renegotiation of Agenda 21.

In Mozambique the incidence of poverty reaches about 70 per cent of the population. To address this negative picture, the Government approved an action plan for the reduction of absolute poverty, commonly known as PARPA, for the period 2001-2005. The strategic vision of PARPA is founded on two imperatives: the need to maintain peace and stability and the need for rapid, sustained and broad-based growth, where private initiatives play an important role. The programme has gained strong support from the meeting of the Consultative Group that was held recently in Maputo and a boost from Mozambican debt reduction, made within the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Mozambique is greatly thankful to all its cooperating partners for the support pledged at the Consultative

Group meeting and for the enhanced HIPC. We hope for a quick implementation of the commitments made, so that our resolve to combat poverty can be a success.

Looking at the longer term, the Government of Mozambique launched a national initiative, Agenda 2025, a strategy based on a constructive dialogue on the future of Mozambique. The Agenda aims at creating, through a participatory and inclusive process, a national strategic vision for development, as well as strengthening the Government's and civil society's ability to define and implement national policies and projects.

The fight against HIV/AIDS is another priority for the Government of Mozambique, for which it has adopted a national strategic plan that focuses on prevention and reduction of the impact of the disease. The plan places the human being at the centre of action and is directed at the vulnerable groups of the society, including women, orphaned children and youth, particularly girls. In this endeavour, the Government has adopted a multisector approach, with the active involvement of all stakeholders, including our civil society.

Because HIV/AIDS is a global problem, combating it calls for a global solution, and we commend the United Nations for having proposed the creation of a Global AIDS and Health Fund to combat HIV/AIDS. The Fund will contribute positively to the prevention and combat of this epidemic, which gravely affects the region of sub-Saharan Africa.

Floods affected Mozambique in the years 2000 and 2001 consecutively, which resulted in loss of life and production and damage to infrastructure, including roads, schools, hospitals and houses, and forced people to flee from their lands and abandon their belongings. These catastrophes posed a serious setback to the development of our country.

We are encouraged by the outcome of the Post-Flood Reconstruction Conference, held in Maputo in July 2001, at which the Government of Mozambique presented the reconstruction programme for the central region of the country, following the devastation caused by the floods in the early part of 2001. At that Conference, the Government also had the opportunity to report on progress made on the implementation of the programme that had been presented at the International Reconstruction Conference on Mozambique in Rome in May 2000. Once again, we wish to thank all those who extended assistance to our country. The Government of Mozambique also appreciates the contribution of the United Nations system and the international community at large in our efforts to consolidate peace, to strengthen democratic institutions and to promote development.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my country's faith in the United Nations and its Charter, for they both remain indispensable foundations for a just, peaceful and more prosperous world.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia.

**Mr. Mesfin** (Ethiopia): At the outset, allow me to express my sincere congratulations to the President on his election to lead the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I am fully confident that under his presidency, we will have productive discussions and reach a fruitful conclusion. I would also like to convey my appreciation to the outgoing President for his conduct of the work of the last session.

Let me also take this opportunity to once again convey my Government's warmest congratulations to our Secretary-General on his appointment to lead our Organization for a second term. Indeed, his re-election is well deserved. We are also delighted that the United Nations and the Secretary-General were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for this year. It is a testimony to and a recognition of the important work the United Nations has been doing.

It is now over two months since the terrible events of 11 September. What happened on that day touched not only the people of the United States but also the whole world. Not only because scores of countries lost nationals, but also because New York, the seat of the United Nations, is in many ways the capital of the world. The terrorists might have succeeded in committing this unimaginable and barbaric crime, but we have no doubt that they have failed to extinguish the hope and vitality that New York symbolizes and embodies.

Terrorism is not new to Ethiopia. For the past 10 years, we have been victims of terrorist attacks, and we have combated it. That is why we remain committed to doing our utmost to enhance the international effort to root out terrorism.

Over the long term, terrorism will be defeated when the ideological cover it is wearing is removed and shown to be empty. But this can be achieved only when those who are capable of perpetrating heinous crimes are not only denied safe havens, but also deprived of any alibi. This is where, among other things, the fight against poverty becomes all the more critical.

The fight against poverty is not as elusive as the fight against terrorism. For the former, we know the causes, and we know how to fight it and which tools to use. What we lack is the global political will to act. The grimness of conditions in Africa in this regard is obvious. There is no need for me to go into detail regarding the statistics on the situation in Africa.

African leaders have taken the conclusions of the Millennium Assembly a step further and have come up with the New African Initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). They have drawn a broad plan on how to bring peace, security and development to a continent that has been plagued by conflict, overwhelmed with insecurity and mired in underdevelopment. The main thrust of the initiative is that we in Africa have duly acknowledged the responsibility for our continent's fate. Hence, we fully accept that peace, security, democracy, good governance and sound economic management are essential conditions for economic growth and sustainable development. At the same time, we are fully aware that Africa at present lacks the required resources and capacity to implement this initiative. This new African initiative thus calls for a complementary obligation on the part of the international community.

I would like to point out the importance of this mutual obligation. Without it, we cannot look forward to the future with confidence; without it, the consequences are bound to be grave. This is the challenge that we face in Africa. The international community must confront it with renewed vigour and dedication.

On the subject of our national effort to seize the opportunity presented by the prevailing peace in my country, I have the pleasure to inform the Assembly that we are now back on track in terms of playing our proper role for peace and investing all our energy and resources in fighting poverty at the national level. This is a war, and we count on our partners to stand with us in waging it. Our strategy in fighting poverty touches on everything we do — in politics, diplomacy and the economic domain.

We want to succeed in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic affecting our country. This major scourge must be defeated. We are determined to fight against corruption, and our record is unambiguous in this area. We are committed to pursuing this without any let-up.

I would now like to turn to the political and security situation in our subregion, which, for obvious reasons, is critical for us, as it should be a source of concern for the international community.

The problem in Somalia needs to be resolved as speedily as possible. There is no reason why the situation should be allowed to continue festering, to the detriment of the people of Somalia and of the subregion in general. The parties to the conflict have to sit down without preconditions to establish a broad-based Government. That is what was called for by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development at the meeting at the summit level in November 2000. This has to be implemented. This is the most viable alternative. To do less would amount to abandoning Somalia for international terrorists to wreak havoc there and in the subregion. The establishment of a broad-based Government in Somalia that includes all the major political forces in the country is a crucial step towards peace-making in Somalia, for which there is no substitute. Ethiopia intends, along with other members of the IGAD subcommittee on Somalia, to play a more proactive role for the realization of this objective.

We are also prepared to do our level best to assist in the process of national reconciliation in Sudan. We plan to be more active in this undertaking as well. We believe that to bring the peace process forward, the will and determination of the parties is critical. But they need to be assisted, and assist we will, in good faith and with all the necessary responsibility.

With regard to the situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreement, it is neither prudent nor proper for me to conceal from the international community both our disappointment and, more importantly, our growing concern. But let me, right from the outset, lest I be misunderstood, make one important point absolutely clear. Ethiopia is committed to the peace process and to

the scrupulous implementation of the Algiers Agreement. This is how we intend to continue in the future. We want the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) to succeed.

However, success in this or in any other conflict situation cannot be achieved by the efforts of one of the parties alone. This describes the situation we are facing in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Prudence dictates that we call a spade a spade. Eritrea is not complying with the Algiers Agreement, an agreement which we believe is fair and in the interest of both parties to protect.

The Temporary Security Zone established by the Algiers Agreement is required to be a demilitarized zone separating the two forces. This is the most critical provision of the Algiers Agreement, whose violation would logically unravel the whole peace process. Eritrea has continued to refuse to maintain the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone as a demilitarized buffer area between the two forces. Regrettably, this violation is taking place under UNMEE's nose. We have continued to complain, but in vain.

UNMEE might have felt that Eritrea's compliance would eventually be secured through appeasement and by ignoring Ethiopia's legitimate concern. But our experience has made it unmistakably clear that appeasement has never worked with Eritrea. And it is not working now. What we have started witnessing lately is an ever-increasing mobilization of troops by Eritrea along the common border. Under these circumstances, lack of vigilance on the part of UNMEE and its policy of appeasement appears to be making another round of fighting close to inevitable. The Eritrean authorities might have felt that tension along the common border is useful in the light of domestic political necessities. It might serve a purpose for diverting popular attention from the domestic front, but it is manifestly reckless and dangerous. Under the circumstances, we call on the United Nations, as a co-guarantor of the Algiers Peace Agreement, to shoulder its full responsibility to ensure that the Agreement is scrupulously followed. The Security Council should send an unambiguous message to Eritrea to immediately desist from all actions that endanger the peace process.

UNMEE needs to wake up and take Ethiopia's real concern seriously. Let there be no doubt about Ethiopia's continuing commitment to the scrupulous observance of the Algiers Agreement and to the peace process. Ethiopia will continue to do this faithfully. Ethiopia is also equally determined to respond to real threats, and reserves its right to act in self-defence.

*Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice President, took the Chair.*

There should be no doubt about Ethiopia's commitment to peace and stability and to carrying out its responsibilities to the best of its abilities on matters that affect the international community as a whole — first of all in its own subregion and in Africa. Its commitment to the United Nations endures. Ethiopia is a country that has always been true to principles of international law and to their scrupulous observance. We are proud of this tradition and we cherish it. This is a tradition we will continue to be guided by.

**The Acting President**: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mervyn Assam, Minister for Enterprise Development and Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. Assam** (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago would like to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. His unanimous endorsement by both his regional group and all Member States is testimony of the high esteem in which he and his country are held by the Organization. He may rest assured of the full cooperation of my delegation as he engages in the task of presiding over the work of the United Nations.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Harri Holkeri, President of the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, for the skilful manner in which he guided the Organization during his tenure.

My delegation also congratulates the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his election to serve this body for a second term. Mr. Annan has brought a unique vision and a sense of purpose to the United Nations, engendering in the Organization a renewed spirit to address the issues confronting the international community at the dawn of this century. In so doing he has sought to put the basic rights and collective aspirations of human beings at the centre of the work of the United Nations. It is not surprising therefore that both Mr. Annan and the Organization that he so effectively heads should this year be recipients of one

of the world's most coveted and prestigious awards, the Nobel Prize for Peace. Trinidad and Tobago extends to them its most sincere congratulations.

It is with an equal sense of pride that I also feel compelled to mention that the twin island State of Trinidad and Tobago is the birthplace of another of this year's Nobel laureates, Sir Vidiadhar Naipaul, recipient of the Prize for Literature.

It is propitious that 2001 was proclaimed the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations by the General Assembly. It is a clear acknowledgement by the international community that it is only through dialogue that the voices of diverse peoples, and their approaches to the many challenges that face them, find expression. Indeed, tolerance and respect for diversity remain key components of the strategies that must be developed to address these concerns. Dialogue that is fair and free of fear speaks not merely of a civilized society but of a society that will endure. History will judge us, not by our so-called progress, but by what we as people, as nation States and as a world community allow to endure.

In this regard, the fundamental values enshrined in the Millennium Declaration are so integral to this process that they can never be overemphasized. They provide the much needed guidance required in maintaining focus and commitment as we strive to address these global challenges. Indeed, in the context of unfolding world events, there appears to be a greater and more urgent need to recommit ourselves to the values inherent in dialogue among nations.

Two months ago, in our host city of New York, in Washington, D.C., and in Pennsylvania, the world witnessed the most heinous terrorist assault. Many Member States, including my own, count their citizens among the victims. We have all been affected by the diverse and widening repercussions of that assault. It was a harsh and tragic reminder that we live in a global environment and that events in one country can have an impact on each and every one of us.

We must recognize those vicious acts for what they are. No country is immune from terrorism. We have a collective responsibility to send a strong and clear message that such acts will not go unpunished. Action has been initiated to counter them. Member States must therefore pursue with renewed vigour, at the national and international levels, all appropriate measures designed to combat this scourge against mankind. In keeping with this stance, Trinidad and Tobago has already acceded to 11 of the international conventions against terrorism. Trinidad and Tobago vehemently condemns terrorism in all its manifestations, wherever it occurs.

Acts of terrorism have their origin in the hearts and minds of the misguided. There are now looming threats of recourse to bioterrorism, chemical warfare and even nuclear weapons. The international community should not delude itself that conventional tactics will return that sense of security that many parts of the world enjoyed prior to 11 September. A world forum like the United Nations must address the fundamental underlying causes — the social, economic, political and psychological conditions that provide a fertile breeding ground for terrorism. We have a moral responsibility to our citizens, to our children and to coming generations, to make the world a better place for them by denying the terrorist his use of fear and intimidation.

Let me extend, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, our condolences to those who lost their lives in the recent tragic aeroplane crash.

Despite the gravity and topical nature of the phenomenon of terrorism, we cannot allow the spectre of terrorism to deter us in our sense of purpose as we pursue developmental objectives aimed at the betterment of our peoples. Neither should we allow it to deflect attention from other activities which impact just as negatively on our societies, such as the illicit drug trade and the illegal trade in small arms. For its part, my Government has enacted legislation authorizing the confiscation of the assets resulting from drug trafficking. In like manner, existing legislation will be strengthened and relevant measures put in place as part of my country's contribution to the international effort in the fight against terrorism.

It is this very need to preserve democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, that spurred the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to propose, in 1989, a renewed focus on the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court. We will continue our efforts to have the crimes of illegal drug trafficking and terrorism included within the jurisdiction of the Court.

At the national level, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the need also to maintain a

focus on promoting economic growth and creating a better quality of life for all its citizens as key elements in preserving democracy. In this context, the Government has identified nine key objectives aimed at creating a healthier, better educated and highly skilled nation, capable of fully participating in the life of the national community and the wider global society. But even as we pursue these objectives, we know that, as a small island developing State, we have special needs and vulnerabilities. Therefore what is required is a supportive, regional and global environment. That is why we accord special significance to the achievements of the various development targets set out at last year's Millennium Summit. As a small island developing State, we would like to remind this Assembly of the Summit's resolve to implement, rapidly and in full, the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action and the 1999 outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly pertaining to the needs of small island developing States.

Trinidad and Tobago is also of the view that trade remains one of the essential elements for our economic growth. While safety and security concerns have become a priority, the onus is still on the international community to guarantee the strength and stability of commodity prices, on which the majority of developing countries depend to finance their growth and development.

Consideration must also be given to extending debt relief to middle-income countries, as this will free resources otherwise allocated to debt servicing to assist in the financing of critical sectors, such as health and education. Trinidad and Tobago, for example, currently utilizes a significant portion of its gross domestic product to meet debt servicing requirements — resources which would be better utilized in our fight against the AIDS pandemic, which is fast emerging as a major development challenge, not only for Trinidad and Tobago, but for many of our sister islands in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the world.

Resource mobilization at the national, regional and international levels is central to the development of small island States. Trinidad and Tobago has consequently given priority to the mobilization of domestic resources within an overall macroeconomic policy which encourages the creation of a competitive business environment.

Success in domestic resource mobilization is, however, heavily dependent on the external environment and linked to success in accessing the markets of developed countries. Many of the factors which impinge on the process of attracting foreign capital lie outside the control of developing countries. Trinidad and Tobago faces the particular problem of attracting foreign investment in the non-oil sector, which affects the overall development of the social infrastructure. Foreign direct investment also tends to flow where profits are highest, not necessarily where a sound policy for the creation of a hospitable local environment has been instituted.

Of equal significance for developing States is next year's International Conference on Financing for Development, at which the central issue of reforming the decision-making system will be under review. International financial institutions, for their own part, must therefore work to ensure that developing countries are allowed to participate more fully in all policy decisions which directly affect them.

Similarly, the special and differential treatment provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements must be implemented if developing countries are to maximize their potential gains of trade. Trinidad and Tobago is convinced of the need for the WTO to recognize the differences in the levels of development capacity which exist among its members, including developing States. Our position on this issue was clearly enunciated at the just concluded Doha ministerial meeting. Trinidad and Tobago therefore welcomes the agreement reached at that meeting to make special and differential treatment operationally effective to facilitate development and to ensure that modalities for further commitments, including provisions for special and differential treatment, are established by 31 March 2003. We also welcome agreement on a work programme to examine issues related to the trade of small economies for the fuller integration of small and vulnerable economies into the multilateral trading system. We will remain actively engaged as the process unfolds.

To Trinidad and Tobago, as a member of the African-Caribbean-Pacific Group of States (ACP), of critical concern, too, is the inordinate and unjustifiable delay in granting the waiver request for the ACP/European Commission Partnership Agreement. It is an issue which has serious systemic implications for the Organization and it is for this reason that Trinidad and

Tobago, like fellow ACP members, considered it imperative that it be addressed at the ministerial conference.

In the sphere of health, no one would dispute that a real connection exists between a nation's development capacity and the health of its people. In this regard, my Government has noted with special interest the call to strengthen the resolve adopted at the Millennium Summit to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. At the heart of our concern is the fact that the Caribbean region ranks second among the regions of the world where AIDS is the leading cause of death in the 15 to 44 age group, a distinction our region can ill afford to bear.

Trinidad and Tobago again demonstrated its own commitment to international efforts by hosting last month the Tenth International Conference for People Living with HIV/AIDS. Further, Trinidad and Tobago was among those countries specially selected to participate in phase II of the HIV/AIDS vaccine trials, which aims to develop a safe, affordable and accessible vaccine. The Government, too, has successfully negotiated with pharmaceutical companies a 90 per cent reduction in the cost of antiretroviral drugs. Trinidad and Tobago also supports the establishment of the Global Fund for AIDS and Health. As a member of the Transitional Working Group of the Fund, we will seek to ensure that, in the modalities of the Fund, accession will not be burdensome and bureaucratic and that special consideration will be given to the most seriously affected countries.

Another element in the pervading cycle of underdevelopment is the presence of persistent poverty. Trinidad and Tobago fully supports the call of heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit to strive to cut in half by 2015 the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. At the State level, Trinidad and Tobago's progress in the area of poverty eradication is illustrated by the high ranking it has enjoyed since 1977 in the United Nations Human Development Index.

Likewise, Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the agreement on the economic and environmental goals of the United Nations. We therefore welcome the agreements reached at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, especially the establishment of a special climate fund, a fund for least developed countries and the Kyoto Protocol adaptation fund to be established in order to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes. We now encourage developed countries to ratify the Protocol so that it can enter into force as quickly as possible.

As a small island State which relies heavily on the marine environment for our petroleum, natural gas, fishing and tourism industries, we are also committed to upholding the principles and fulfilling the obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We support the work of the International Seabed Authority in respect of the development and exploitation of minerals of the deep seabed for the benefit all humankind. In our quest to ensure the preservation of the marine environment, we reiterate that the question of the transhipment of hazardous waste through the Caribbean Sea is a cause of deep concern to the region since, in many instances, the marine environment constitutes the only meaningful resource on which some States depend for their very economic existence.

Against a landscape of differing stages of development, of differing cultural perspectives and of disparate and competing interests, what does emerge is an undeniable strength of purpose within this body that unites us all in a shared commitment not only to improving the standard of human life, but to preserving it at all costs. Harnessing this strength of purpose ultimately depends on every Member State's appreciating its inherent value and the value it adds by its participation in the work of forums such as these. It is for this reason that we must continue the dialogue, albeit more vigorously, to ensure that the interests of peace and security are better served. Reform of the Security Council must therefore be advanced in a meaningful way. Democratization of the Security Council will require more equitable representation. This goal can be accomplished only through the expansion of the Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories.

The task before us is not insurmountable. We must deepen the dialogue to accelerate implementation of the goals defined at the Millennium Summit and specified in the various global conferences and reviews which have taken place to date. We must ensure that the process of implementation is conducted within a spirit of equity and justice. Equal attention must be given to all groups of countries, developed and

developing, large and small, landlocked, transit and small island developing States. Trinidad and Tobago remains fully committed to this process. Let us make this fifty-sixth session one of defining the process of implementation.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jose Ela Ebang, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Equatorial Guinea.

**Mr. Ela Ebang** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to express our deep satisfaction at seeing Mr. Han Seung-soo presiding over the work of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. For my delegation, the peaceable nature and spirit of dialogue that identify and distinguish his country, the Republic of Korea, together with his outstanding qualities as a diplomat and tireless negotiator — all of which he has demonstrated since the beginning of this session — are guarantees for the success of our work. He can rely on the support and cooperation of Equatorial Guinea.

To the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, we wish to express our sincere congratulations on his re-election for a second term to lead the United Nations and the distinction conferred on him and the United Nations as recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize. We also commend the clear-sightedness and resolve that he has shown in exercising his responsibilities to revitalize this Organization and confirm its role at a time in which peace, security, stability, development and understanding are increasingly precarious. We wish the Secretary-General every success in his endeavours to carry out the purposes enshrined in the Charter. To this end, he may rely on our full trust and support.

I would not wish to proceed any further with my statement without first expressing our most sincere and profound condolences to the Government and fraternal people of the Dominican Republic and to all the families that have been affected by the tragic and appalling plane crash that occurred on 12 November 2001. May God receive all the victims into his kingdom.

This regular session of the General Assembly has been one of mourning, because it is taking place at a time when the international community, without exception, feels that it is being dragged back towards a past that it thought had receded into oblivion. Now, more than ever, since 11 September 2001, the need for security, stability, justice, equity and balance has become a vital imperative and the highest of priorities.

The General Assembly is faced with a dilemma: to evaluate the level of implementation of the commitments undertaken in the framework of the Declaration of the Millennium Summit and at the special sessions of the General Assembly, before and after the Summit, and other international conferences, with a view to adopting the new strategies required, in the light of the failures that have been registered in various fields of activity, while at the same time, tuning up and activating all the mechanisms required for the struggle against and eradication of terrorism, since this is a common enemy, with no identifiable face or location.

Peoples and their Governments constantly face the arduous, complex and inescapable obligation and duty to adapt to new realities and demands that loom ahead in the immediate or remote future. For this reason, Equatorial Guinea concurs with and maintains the opinion that this task cannot and should not rest on the shoulders of one people or one Government or any individual country in an isolated fashion. It should be borne within a collective body such as the United Nations.

We believe and maintain that the United Nations continues to be the best option and best centre for indispensable agreements, with all the wealth that its diversity brings, for the purposes of conflict prevention, crisis management, rapprochement among peoples and enhancement of cooperation among States on the bilateral, subregional, regional and intercontinental levels. For this reason, the Organization must be endowed with the means it requires to organize international society, working to combat intolerance, persistent tension and conflict and the worsening economic situation of poor countries.

In this regard, in the light of recent positive experiences, we advocate greater, closer and more effective cooperation between the United Nations and regional integration groupings, in general, and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in particular.

Together with the need to give the United Nations the means to enhance its capacity, we believe that the time is likewise ripe for both States and international organizations, including the financial agencies, to take

specific and positive steps, without delay, aimed at democratizing international relations, promoting and reaffirming respect for human rights and consolidating the disarmament regime and directing the investment of military expenditures to international action to promote development. Equatorial Guinea is continuing to work towards these objectives through an institutionalized national dialogue involving the political forces of the country.

Equatorial Guinea shares in and insists on the vital need to democratize the Security Council, setting up the greatest possible interlocking and coordination between the work and tasks of that body and the responsibilities of the General Assembly.

In spite of the success that has been achieved in some countries and regions in the area of peacekeeping and peace-building, it is still disquieting to note that these successes have served as culture media that have encouraged areas of tension to persist indefinitely or allowed other threats to peace to erupt. In fact, as the United Nations is redoubling and improving the efforts of peacekeeping and peace-building missions, the Secretary-General has noted in his report on the work of the Organization: "Global military expenditures have continued to rise ... Although official development assistance levels have continued to fall ... military budgets have risen persistently." (*A/56/1, para. 76*)

The same concern about the absence of peace applies to the sorry and disheartening aspect of cooperation to eradicate poverty. For the United Nations and its Development Group and certain non-governmental organizations are striving to translate into reality the decision taken at the Millennium Summit to combat poverty and make globalization an inclusive and not exclusive phenomenon.

Equatorial Guinea associates itself with the principle of shared responsibility, taking the standpoint that the problems that continue to face the least developed countries are indeed the cause of the lack of progress achieved in working towards international objectives of human and social development. We hope and trust that the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 and the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to be held in Monterrey, Mexico in May 2002, and other pertinent instruments will lay the best possible bases for effective cooperation for development.

As I noted earlier, Equatorial Guinea expresses its satisfaction at the reduction of tensions in some countries and regions. At the same time, it calls on and encourages the parties involved in areas where conflicts and disputes are born and persist to redouble their efforts and to use their capabilities and potential to seek peaceful solutions through peaceful negotiations.

In this context, Equatorial Guinea reaffirms that the People's Republic of China is the sole State entity that is representative of the Chinese people.

We also welcome the recent initiative to resume the North-South dialogue for the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula, and we support the principles endorsed and the responsibilities assumed by the Governments of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

At a time when the United Nations is fully engaged in the search for solutions to alleviate the many evils besetting peoples in all corners of the world, through the adoption of strategies and programmes of action to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic to mention just one example, the illegal traffic in weapons and drugs, drug addiction, the mortgaging of the lives of children through their traffic and easy recruitment into the armed forces, discrimination against women, and so forth, the international community's attention has been diverted by unusual events such as the unprecedented terrorist act of 11 September 2001.

The acts carried out against the United States of America on 11 September were undoubtedly attacks against the United Nations. The prevailing atmosphere of the current session of the General Assembly, a year after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration by an unprecedented attendance of 147 heads of State and Government and a total of 189 Member States, and the temporary postponement until next year of the General Assembly's special session on children are eloquent examples, among others, of the challenge and the dilemma faced by the United Nations.

In that context, we reiterate the most vigorous condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and facets, and we reaffirm the Republic of Equatorial Guinea's full support for and solidarity with the people and

Government of the United States of America at this painful and worrisome time, which will be difficult to forget.

The country's competent constitutional organs are currently adopting measures for the integration of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea into existing relevant international conventions on the prevention and suppression of international terrorism, as part of its response to the Joint Declaration on Terrorism, adopted in Brussels on 11 October, and the Dakar Declaration against Terrorism, signed on 17 October 2001, as well as relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

As the Secretary-General's report forcefully points out, the Millennium Declaration insists on the need to promote and intensify institutional cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations:

> "In an increasing globalized world, none of the critical issues we are dealing with can be resolved within a solely national framework. All of them require cooperation, partnership and burden-sharing among Governments, the United Nations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society." (*A/56/1, para. 11*)

In this context, and on behalf of the member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), over which Equatorial Guinea is presiding, we reiterate our deepest recognition of the great support offered by United Nations Member States with respect to resolutions 55/22 and 55/161, on cooperation between the Organization of the United Nations and ECCAS and the observer status conferred on the latter organization.

Given the prevalence of the informed political will of ECCAS States to put an end to conflicts, the loss of innocent lives, the destruction of economic and social infrastructures and extreme poverty in rural areas, we hope and are convinced that the General Assembly will once again pronounce itself in favour of the implementation and improvement of cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS in order that the latter may direct its potential — individual and collective — towards alleviating the new challenges stemming from globalization and liberalization, for the economies of the subregion. This would enhance the path to democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in the subregion, within the context of the excellent and tireless work being carried out by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

I would be remiss if I did not, on behalf of the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, convey to the Assembly his greetings and sincere wishes for success and prosperity to each and every participant. His Excellency had expressed his wish to attend, and regrets not being able to be present at these deliberations.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Donigi, Chairman of the delegation of Papua New Guinea.

**Mr. Donigi** (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the people and Government of Papua New Guinea, I wish to join previous speakers in congratulating the President on his election to this prestigious post.

His election shows the high esteem in which the international community holds both him personally and his country, the Republic of Korea.

My delegation is confident that, through his great diplomatic skills and leadership, which is already evident, he will continue to guide the work of this session of the General Assembly to its successful conclusion.

I also take this opportunity, through him, to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his outstanding leadership and stewardship in facilitating the work of the historic Millennium Summit and the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

We also congratulate and pay tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan for his re-election to the office of Secretary-General of the United Nations and for the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Papua New Guinea is resolute in its commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Papua New Guinea acknowledges the value of many of the United Nations treaties and declarations, including those that advance human rights, the rule of law and good governance. Many of these principles are enumerated in our national Constitution.

We acknowledge that the Organization has had some limitations, many of which are self-inflicted. We note that the United Nations is now in a much healthier

financial position than ever before. However, there is no room for complacency in the pursuit of its reform programme. The United Nations bodies and systems must be restructured to reflect new dynamics and geopolitical changes and to create hope for all at the beginning of the new millennium.

We believe that our common global and regional problems cannot be resolved under the auspices of violence, terrorism, war and destruction; nor can they be resolved in a vacuum. The United Nations provides a forum and an avenue for fostering dialogue for peaceful resolution of disputes.

An effective Security Council, we believe, should be representative of all subregions of the world. My Government also believes that the use of the veto power should be limited to Chapter VII issues, while the working methods and deliberations of the Council should be more transparent and democratic.

Papua New Guinea's development aspirations have been compromised by problems associated with the downturn in the global economy, the economic crisis within the Asia-Pacific region and natural disasters, over all of which we have little control. The Government has addressed these challenges through a comprehensive programme of structural adjustments. We have worked hard to make sure that these structural adjustments are made in the public sector in order to stimulate and expand growth in the private sector.

The measures we have adopted have stabilized the economy. However, as we look into the future, we cannot but hope that the incidents of 11 September will not unduly affect our future recovery. Judging by the evidence of a downturn in the United States economy, it seems clear that every effort is required to make the International Conference on Financing for Development next year a success.

We are grateful to the Friends of Papua New Guinea group, comprising Australia, Japan, the European Commission and China, among others, which have been generous in assisting our Government in its development efforts. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank have also been very positive in their responses to our policies.

My country has experienced an unfortunate and terrible conflict and has been trying to build mutual confidence and security by pursuing a progressive political settlement, including through restoration and development for the past four years in its Bougainville Province. We have utilized the Melanesian way of building consensus between all parties to the conflict. The consensus is now reflected in the Bougainville Peace Agreement, signed by the parties on 30 August this year. The Government is resolute in its desire to implement the Agreement. It has completed work on drafting amendments to our Constitution to provide for greater autonomy, a referendum and amnesty. Together with ongoing efforts to implement other aspects of the Agreement, the parties are expected to facilitate progress on weapons disposal and associated issues, such as reconciliation and the unification of political and administrative structures in Bougainville. A special session of Parliament will be been convened next week, on 22 November, to continue to debate the Agreement. Parliament will deliberate on the constitutional amendments on or soon after 14 December this year.

We wish to place on record our deep appreciation to the United Nations, in particular Ambassador Noel Sinclair and his team on Bougainville, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union, individual European Union members and the Governments of Australia, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu for their continuing and constructive roles in Bougainville.

It is also my pleasure to speak on behalf of the Bougainville parties and the Government to thank the Secretary-General and all members of the Security Council, past and present, for continuing to renew the mandate of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville. We are confident that the Security Council will continue to provide all the assistance we need with respect to arms collection, storage and disposal.

The process of decolonization will not be completed until the people of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories have exercised their right to self-determination and/or achieved self-government.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the cooperation of the Government of France with regard to the progress made in implementing the Nouméa Accords and setting in motion the eventual exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of New Caledonia, especially the indigenous Kanak people.

We acknowledge the full cooperation of the Government of New Zealand in the progress made so far with respect to the question of the Tokelau Islands.

My Government notes the progress made in East Timor. We heartily welcome the announcement of 20 May 2002 as the day the people of East Timor will attain independence and nationhood. We look forward to welcoming them as a full Member of this family of nations.

Papua New Guinea continues to urge the other administering Powers to cooperate with the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in implementing and completing its mandate soon.

The future of each of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories can be assured only by a positive, constructive and, above all, transparent approach to developing a unique solution for each of them.

The fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly established the Consultative Process on oceans to improve the coordination and management of the programmes associated with the use, development and protection of the oceans and seas. The Consultative Process has been successful in bringing to the fore, and focusing the attention of Member States on, a number of issues.

The Pacific Islands Forum group includes small island developing States that are custodians of the largest ocean space. This ocean space is rich in natural and marine resources. However, the small island developing States of the region have limited human, financial and technological capacities to harvest, control, manage and secure these resources for the benefit of our current and future generations.

It has been said that to divert the poor from the call of the evil, it is not enough to appeal to their stomachs only. Rather, one must appeal to their aspirations as well. We joined others having particular interest in the sustainable use and management of the fish stocks in our region to establish the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean in September 2000. The next meeting of the signatories to this Convention will be held in Papua New Guinea early next year.

We welcome Malta's lodgement last Sunday of its instrument of ratification of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The Agreement, which will now come into force on 11 December 2001, called on States to cooperate to enhance the ability of developing States, in particular the least developed and small island developing States, to conserve and develop their own fisheries for such stocks. For all small island developing States in the Pacific, financing for development has to be linked to the development of their fisheries sector.

In order to emphasize my point, I have provided some data on the last page of my written statement. The Assembly will note that the Central and Western Pacific fishery is valued in excess of $2.5 billion per annum, while the Pacific small island developing States earn an average of only $66 million per annum in licensing fees. For the small island developing States of the Pacific to attain sustainable growth and development, this situation has to change.

Last year my delegation also welcomed the conclusion by the International Seabed Authority of the exploration code for seabed mining. Continuing work is to be undertaken with respect to a code for exploration for polymetallic sulfides and cobalt-rich crusts. Papua New Guinea has particular interest in polymetallic sulfides.

My delegation would like to thank once again the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, Ambassador Satya Nandan, for his report on the work of the Authority. We welcome the execution of contracts by pioneer investors and urge the remaining pioneer investor to follow suit as soon as possible.

Papua New Guinea supports the principles contained in the Barbados Programme of Action and in Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. We continue to support the principles contained in the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We once again stress the urgent need for developed countries to make a concerted effort to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

My delegation welcomes the achievements of part two of the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the climate change Convention, held at Bonn

last July, and the successful completion of the recent seventh session of the Conference, held at Marrakesh, Morocco.

Another of the greatest challenges facing the United Nations is to strengthen the capacity of the global community to respond promptly and effectively to climate change and natural disaster. In 1997, Papua New Guinea experienced drought and frost caused by El Niño and in 1998 came the tsunami and the La Niña phenomenon, bringing floods and landslides and leaving death and destruction in their wake. We acknowledge the prompt and generous support of our neighbours in dealing with the effects of such disasters. Global warming has also brought increased numbers of cases of diseases such as malaria to the higher-altitude and most populous region of our country. The threat of increased incidence of malaria in that region is real, and could negatively affect the demographics of the country. There is definitely a link among climate change, natural disaster and the spread and increased incidence of disease.

Nor is Papua New Guinea exempt from the HIV/AIDS epidemic or from tuberculosis. We are grateful to Australia and to other partners which have provided assistance in that field of health care. We also welcome again last year's announcement by the Japanese Government that it would set aside substantial financial resources for disease eradication programmes in developing countries.

The forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit for Sustainable Development must be platforms for launching new and innovative methods for realigning the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions so that they focus more on development and on the eradication of poverty. There must be a concerted effort to link new and innovative financial instruments to the delivery of specific outcome-oriented approaches. There must be flexibility in assisting developing countries, especially small island, landlocked and least developed countries. As I have said before, for the peoples of the Pacific islands to become meaningful participants in the globalization process, new financial instruments and mechanisms should be developed to facilitate the transfer of technological capacity and expertise in the fisheries sector.

Papua New Guinea is committed to peaceful dialogue among nations and condemns those that employ terrorism against people or that finance, recruit or train terrorists or mercenaries. The barbaric acts of 11 September have been described in many ways. Some have called them horrendous, despicable and the work of evil-doers. The use of any adjective to describe the horror and the continuing threat to human security only adds to the esteem in which some hold the perpetrators. The use of qualifiers to describe the innocence of the deceased lends legitimacy to those acts and shields the nakedness of their wilful and wrongful nature.

Papua New Guinea condemns the 11 September attacks on the United States and supports the ongoing campaign by the United States and its allies against terrorism. On behalf of the Government and the people of Papua New Guinea, I convey our heartfelt condolences to the immediate families and other relatives of all those who had their lives brutally taken away from them in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. My Government is committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and is in the process of examining all existing conventions relating to terrorism with a view to acceding to them early next year.

Papua New Guinea also notes the death several days ago of the political leader of the people of the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya, Mr. Theys Eluay, under questionable circumstances. As a neighbouring country which shares a common border with that province, Papua New Guinea is concerned about the likely spillover effect of new developments in the province. We urge Indonesia to undertake a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into Mr. Eluay's death, to make public the results and to bring to justice those responsible.

My Government is committed to a stable, peaceful and environmentally safe world and therefore supports the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. We call on all that have nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including biological weapons, to stop testing, manufacturing and storing them, and furthermore to take steps to destroy them.

We also support efforts to ban transboundary movements of radioactive and other hazardous wastes through the Pacific region. We call on those States that previously conducted nuclear-weapon tests or that have

discharged chemical or other non-degradable wastes in our subregion to adequately compensate and provide appropriate medical assistance to the scores of persons and families affected. Remedial action should be taken to clean up the damage done to the environment.

Global and regional partnerships to promote change are the key to addressing the challenges that the world will face in the twenty-first century. Papua New Guinea believes that a challenge for Member States is to reshape the Organization so that it can serve as an effective tool for implementing our collective desire: to make the global village a better place for all.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, Chairperson of the delegation of Denmark.

**Ms. Løj** (Denmark): The Danish Government associates itself with the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

On 11 September a brutal blow was delivered to the people of the United States of America. At the same time, it was a strike against the foundations of the United Nations and against its mission to secure peace and prosperity for mankind in a spirit of collaboration and shared values. Extremists have seen fit to take the lives of thousands of innocent people to press their message. The Danish people have reacted with outrage and sorrow. We strongly condemn the criminal and cowardly act; our thoughts and our compassion are with the victims, their families and their friends.

This year the Nobel Peace Prize went to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations. May I congratulate both the Secretary-General and the United Nations and its staff. The choice could not have been better or the timing more acute.

The horrific terrorist attack on the United States changed the agenda of the General Assembly. From the outset, the international community has demonstrated its resolve to confront the menace of terrorism. The General Assembly and the Security Council have passed resolutions unanimously condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks, and countries and other international organizations have followed with a host of other initiatives to that end. The international community has stood up to the challenge united.

Denmark welcomes the broad coalition of countries that has rallied behind the United States response to the terrorist attacks in order to effectively bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of international terrorism.

By acting together, by acting resolutely, by redoubling our efforts, we will stop the terror. At the international level, we need the United Nations to provide the norms and the international legal framework required to define and criminalize acts of terror. The United Nations has already put important parts of the legal machinery in place with the 12 existing conventions aimed at combating specific forms of terror. Furthermore, work is well under way towards a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

At the national level, countries must urgently take concrete steps to implement Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). States must have national legislation in place in order to prosecute persons supporting or committing acts of terrorism. At the same time, countries must be ready to take steps to preclude in all possible ways the operation and financing of terrorist networks within their territories. All countries should accede to and enforce the 12 conventions against international terrorism and should ensure prompt follow-up of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

Three weeks ago, the Danish Government submitted a draft bill on national follow-up in our Parliament, and I can assure the Assembly that Denmark will do its utmost to cooperate with the Counter-Terrorism Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001).

These measures form part of our overall efforts to create a better world, in which human dignity is guaranteed and human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully respected. Indeed, recent events underscore further the need to make the world a better place, in particular for those vast groups of people who live in poverty. For poor people who see no possibility of improving their economic and social standing, turning to extremist religious and ideological views and networks may be tempting. We need to secure real political, economic and social opportunities for the world's poor and disadvantaged.

The goals identified by world leaders during the Millennium Summit give our work direction in the decades to come.

Armed conflicts cause inconceivable human suffering and material destruction and are often the main obstacles to development. An effective response to present-day conflicts requires a long-term political commitment from a united international community in the form of a diplomatic, political, economic, military and civil engagement. The United Nations is the international body vested with a universal mandate to secure support for conflict prevention. Often, it is also the only body capable of legitimate conflict management. Thus many people around the world are dependent on the effective and prompt reaction of the United Nations.

Fortunately, we have in recent years witnessed quite a number of successful United Nations operations. Let me single out three examples, in three different parts of the world.

First, in East Timor the United Nations presence has furthered political progress towards the building of a new nation State, set for May next year.

Secondly, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea has demonstrated the readiness of the international community to resolve conflicts and has strengthened the credibility of United Nations peacekeeping in Africa. That Mission also marked the first and successful deployment of the Multinational United Nations Stand-by Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG).

Thirdly, the day after tomorrow is an important milestone for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and for the people of Kosovo. Hopefully, the latter will participate in great numbers in the elections. The Danish Government has noted with satisfaction that both the Serbian and the Yugoslav Governments have endorsed Kosovo Serb participation in the elections.

However, other conflicts, not least in Africa, continue to cause tremendous suffering to the people affected and to challenge the international community. The prevention and management of violent conflicts have therefore become an integral part of Denmark's comprehensive engagement in developing countries.

The United Nations has a unique role to play in helping Afghanistan to rebuild itself and to re-enter the international community. Denmark strongly supports the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Brahimi. We are ready to contribute further to the ongoing relief and humanitarian efforts, as well as to the immense task that lies ahead: reconstructing Afghanistan.

A conflict of particular concern is that in the Middle East, which threatens to escalate beyond control. The Mitchell report and the Tenet Plan still provide important windows of opportunity. The United Nations, the European Union, the United States and neighbouring States must redouble their efforts to get the parties to take immediate action to stop the violence and to create the atmosphere necessary to restart negotiations.

The Millennium development goals provide the framework for each and every country to act in a concerted fashion on a range of key development challenges.

In this connection, I should like to refer to the Secretary-General's road map for the implementation of the Millennium Summit Declaration, in which he stated that we have just emerged from an era of commitment and stressed that we must now enter an era of implementation. This timely reminder has our full support.

The last 10 years have seen more countries than ever before commit themselves to a democratic and accountable political system. This trend is encouraging. Open societies committed to democracy are more likely to respect the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms and to foster accountable governments. National responsibilities for development, as expressed through good governance and the promotion of human rights and democracy, are key to the peaceful settlement of conflicts and essential tools for economic development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development is an encouraging step in this direction.

In building on these positive trends, we must go even further. We must take concerted steps forward on a whole range of key issues, from security, human rights and trade to development.

In this regard, our planning prior to 11 September is now showing unexpected rewards. The World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Doha, the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg are all part of the same, global process. They are a unique

opportunity for us to show that multilateral cooperation in the economic field can make a difference and that we can achieve globalization with a human face.

Our primary target is clearly to eradicate poverty. This objective should be at the heart of the international effort in the coming weeks and months. We need a "Global Deal" that encompasses all human beings, with the aim of achieving long-term sustainable development, based on global coherence between economic, social and environmental policies.

Thus, we need partnerships between developed and developing countries; between all development actors, including the wider United Nations family, comprising the WTO, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and drawing upon civil society and the private sector. All partners need to be on board to achieve a balance between national, international and systemic endeavours.

The Financing for Development Conference in Mexico, to be held in March 2002, is a first and important opportunity to demonstrate our new resolve on development. We could leave Monterrey with important elements of a global framework that would help us pull an unprecedented number of people out of poverty over the coming 15 years. The human and security benefits at stake are compelling.

We face a great responsibility in the days, weeks and months ahead. Both developed and developing countries need to set their priorities straight in order to strike this Global Deal. In that sense, a global commitment to realizing the national potential for development of the developing countries should be met, in the spirit of partnership, by the developed countries, with full support for reaching these goals.

We also reiterate the call on the industrialized countries to grant more generous development assistance and to increase their official development assistance so that, as a minimum, it reaches the established United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product that is necessary to achieve the Millennium goals.

Recent events have demonstrated that international cooperation is indispensable. The United Nations is the right forum for dealing with many of these challenges. Let us equip the Organization to meet them effectively. By closing a Global Deal, we can take development forward on the broad front.

**The Acting President**: I call on Mr. Pracha Guna-Kasem, Chairman of the delegation of Thailand.

**Mr. Guna-Kasem** (Thailand): It is an honour for me to deliver this statement on behalf of Mr. Surakiart Sathirathai, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand. Allow me to join all previous speakers in expressing our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those who lost their lives or suffered from the tragic incidents of 11 September 2001. The people and Government of Thailand share the feelings of sorrow and outrage caused by those acts of terrorism. Our condolences go to the people and Government of the United States.

I wish to extend my congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency for the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly and express my full confidence that, under his guidance, we shall be able to build upon the United Nations Millennium Declaration and accomplish our goals of bringing peace, prosperity and well-being to this world.

I also wish to express our warmest congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan on his being conferred the Nobel Peace Prize, together with the United Nations, as well as on his re-election as Secretary-General. This prestigious recognition has been made because of the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General himself and of the dedicated United Nations staff. The achievement of the Secretary-General is noted in his Millennium Report, which encapsulates the United Nations activities ahead, outlines the framework for the tasks and focuses on people as the centre of development, both at the international and national levels.

After the events of 11 September 2001, the shared destiny of the world will depend greatly on how we manage to cope with these emerging new realities and growing complexities. No country is truly safe from terrorism and no one is capable of fighting it alone. Now is the time for every nation to contribute and participate in the joint efforts to combat terrorism.

In Thailand, we resolutely condemn all forms of terrorism and are fully supportive of all the international community's efforts to combat this grave threat to global peace and security. Thailand supports all actions against terrorism in the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and international law. We have extended cooperation to the international

community through existing laws, such as those on mutual assistance in criminal matters in the form of information exchange and intelligence sharing. The Thai Government is amending existing domestic legislation and regulations to enable the country to be party to relevant international conventions, especially the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

At the regional level, Thailand has participated actively in the recent regional gatherings at the highest level, where international terrorism received a high priority, namely the recent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders Meeting in Shanghai. We joined other APEC leaders in expressing grave concern over the threat to world peace and the stability of the world economy caused by terrorism and in reaffirming a renewed sense of urgency to restore confidence to the global economy.

At the 7th Summit of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 5 November 2001 in Brunei Darussalam, ASEAN leaders issued a declaration outlining specific measures to further strengthen cooperation to deal with the threat of terrorism in the region. Measures proposed include the enhancement of intelligence exchange and the deepening of cooperation among law enforcement agencies. ASEAN leaders also stressed the need to strengthen cooperation with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum and affirmed that the United Nations should play a major role in this regard.

My country, Thailand, supports a ministerial-level international conference on international terrorism, under the auspices of the United Nations, to be held at the earliest opportunity. This should facilitate the discussion of problems and cooperation on antiterrorism, leading to possible concrete measures at the global level. Terrorism should not be identified with any ethnic group, faith, or nationality. Otherwise, our efforts could result in greater danger for our peoples.

International terrorism has also exacerbated the slowdown in the global economy. This carries with it significant social ramifications as well. Airlines, tourism and related industries worldwide have felt the impact of international tension. Countries already struggling to recover from the recent economic slowdown are preparing to safeguard their economies from sliding further into sluggishness. Confronted with the ever widening gap between developed and developing countries, the United Nations and Member States must work together to arrest and reverse this trend.

The efforts to bridge the gap must not be confined to the United Nations framework alone. The World Trade Organization meeting in Doha, Qatar, which was just concluded, was a timely opportunity in which nations proved that they could work together and achieve substantial progress in pushing forward the global trade agenda for the common good of the world.

Since assuming office early this year, the present Thai Government has been pursuing a new approach to economic and social policy. The Thai Government has introduced a series of economic and social schemes aimed at promoting the capacity-building of the people at the grass-roots level. For instance, it has established the People's Bank and microcredit schemes for both the rural and the urban poor. This is to assist each community by financing small, local projects so as to develop and market a community's own products based on local know-how. In addition, more than 2 million small-scale Thai farmers will benefit from the Government's debt suspension scheme and a nationwide health insurance scheme.

On the issue of Afghanistan, the United Nations and the international community, in collaboration with the Afghans themselves, must move quickly to formulate modalities that would help restore order and stability. We should also render all possible assistance to Afghanistan, starting with assistance of a humanitarian nature at this crucial time and assistance aimed at capacity-building in the near future. Thailand, for its part, will provide a fairly large amount of rice — approximately 3,000 metric tons — as food relief for the Afghans. The Thai Red Cross has also donated 10,000 blankets.

Within our own region of South-East Asia, Thailand has reinvigorated bilateral relations with our immediate neighbours and has cooperated closely in pursuing a common vision of opening borders. We have also decided to establish joint production bases and transportation linkages. These initiatives carry on the momentum begun last year when the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) adopted a resolution proposed by Thailand on the "Decade of Greater Mekong Subregion Development

Cooperation, 2000-2009". This subregion has been placed at the forefront of the Asia-Pacific development agenda. In addition, Thailand also has a role in keeping peace in the region. We take special pride in the fact that two Thai Generals have successively served as Force Commanders of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the successor operation to the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET). This is part and parcel of Thailand's commitment to shouldering its fair share of international responsibility, particularly in South-East Asia.

We envisage the United Nations playing a major role in strengthening the foundation for a future world that will be peaceful, tolerant, and sustainable for our peoples and future generations. Therefore, Thailand is fully supportive of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and participated actively in the recently concluded World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa.

As we celebrate the fifty-sixth anniversary of the United Nations, and as we congratulate the Secretary-General and the Organization, we must ask ourselves: what do we expect of the United Nations? I believe we expect it to work even harder towards cultivating a culture of peace, as well as improving the pace of international social and economic development. In these endeavours, we believe that rich and poor nations alike must contribute in their varied capacities. These national efforts must go hand in hand with those of the United Nations.

Let us focus on the immediate priorities of maintaining peace and harmony in the world. Let us pledge to work together with even greater vigour for the political, economic, social, and physical well-being of our peoples. These are, and should be, the enduring priorities for the United Nations and for all humankind.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Earl Huntley, Chairman of the delegation of Saint Lucia.

**Mr. Huntley** (Saint Lucia): Allow me first to offer the congratulations of the delegation of Saint Lucia to the President of the General Assembly on his election. We wish to assure him of our full support for the successful outcome of these deliberations.

As we meet with the global fraternity of nations during this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Saint Lucia once more joins its voice with those who have deplored and condemned the despicable acts of terror of 11 September 2001, that so brutalized our great host city, New York, and our host country, as they cruelly and callously extinguished thousands of innocent and vibrant lives. We are however heartened by the universal resolve of all peace-loving nations to rid the earth of the scourge of terrorism. We have noted, too, how quickly and steadfastly some of these nations have come together as a coalition in pursuit of that endeavour and have embarked on a war against terrorism.

We should, however, recognize that the defeat of this type of terrorism, as laudable and desirable an act as it may be, will not by itself create a greater humanity or a better world. For there are billions in the world today who have not been at war, but who have not known peace; they suffer from other terrors. There are millions, so many of whom are children, who succumb daily to the horrors of malnutrition and starvation. There are still millions of others who are wasting away from disease. Thousands of people see their human rights violated on a daily basis. We therefore need to remind ourselves that there are many other issues that have been engendering their own brand of fear and conflict in the world today, and that more often than not the underlying cause of such conflict is the lack of economic and human development.

If we are to attain greater humanity, and if we are to create a better world, we must commit ourselves to a greater collective responsibility towards all those other issues. We must adopt the same rapid global militaristic response to solving them as that in the new war on terrorism. Some of these issues have been with us for too long and by now should have disappeared from the world agenda. Our fragile humanity cannot endure another century of widening disparity between and within nations. We can no longer withstand the silent battle between the haves and the have nots. Humanity cannot tolerate ever increasing disease, deprivation, hunger, illiteracy, poverty, economic strife and war.

For the ideal of a greater humanity not to continue to elude us, we must now found it on this new attitude, this new vision, in which people everywhere, nations everywhere, are galvanized into higher levels of cooperation in pursuit of these common concerns, in

particular concerns such as the guarantee of economic and social security, sustainable development and governance of the multilateral trading system. In this new philosophy of cooperation, the United Nations must play the central role.

It is from this perspective that Saint Lucia reiterates its call for the adoption of a holistic approach towards poverty eradication. Saint Lucia is firm in its view that the United Nations is the only Organization capable of pooling the requisite knowledge and financial resources for global action against poverty. International cooperation on poverty eradication must give due consideration to, among other things, debt forgiveness through concerted support for an improved Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. It must ensure special and differential treatment on a contractual basis for developing countries and sustained financial support for the Organization's development programmes.

The HIV/AIDS plague, which continues to ravage the world, also demands this new collective response. Saint Lucia acknowledges that the United Nations has already begun spearheading the global fight against HIV/AIDS. The United Nations special session on HIV/AIDS has done a great deal to raise global awareness about the magnitude of the pandemic. Saint Lucia also welcomes the establishment of the Global AIDS and Health Fund, which is intended to increase the ability of the global community to combat this scourge. However, if humanity is to win the fight against this twentieth century plague, the international community must make available new and additional financial resources towards research and the development of affordable drugs. We stress that these drugs must be cheap and widely obtainable. It is time that corporations cease putting the acquisition of more and more profit ahead of the health and lives of the unfortunate who have been afflicted by diseases such as AIDS. Are we not being inhumane when our overriding objective is to make as huge a profit as possible on the sickness of so many, rather than ensuring that the essential drugs that they need to end their suffering are easily available?

As we survey the multilateral trading system, Saint Lucia continues to be concerned that the thrust towards allowing market forces to totally determine the scope, structure and outcomes of economic activity is not being counterbalanced by mechanisms to fairly distribute welfare gains and to protect the more vulnerable, small States like Saint Lucia from the consequences of market failure.

The perilous state of the banana industry in Saint Lucia and the other Windward Islands of the Eastern Caribbean is the painful outcome of that thrust, an ill-advised policy of globalization and trade liberalization at all costs. The charge of World Trade Organization (WTO) incompatibility that was made against the preferential trade regime, justly accorded to Saint Lucia and other Agricultural Commodities Committee banana-producing countries under the Lomé Agreement, has brought about the near collapse of this vital industry. Saint Lucia welcomes the recent initiative by the United States for a new licensing agreement for the trading of bananas on the European market, an initiative that brought an end to the debilitating banana war with Europe.

Saint Lucia once more wishes to place on record its deep appreciation for the perseverance and fortitude of the European Union, which stood by its international obligations throughout these years of dispute. We applaud the news just in from Doha that, after 18 months, a WTO waiver has finally been granted to the Cotonou Agreement, thus paving the way for the implementation of the new banana-marketing arrangements. We hope that these recent developments are not too late to save our industry. But the case of the great banana dispute will always remain as a striking testimony to the inequities of the liberalized trading system.

Saint Lucia is also concerned about the actions of several organizations, such as the World Economic Council and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which seem to be attempting to usurp the traditional roles and functions of the United Nations and of national Governments. In the face of the near demise of the vital banana industry, Saint Lucia and the other islands of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) sought to diversify their economies by building on their competitive advantage in offshore financial services. But OECD countries denounced our efforts as being harmful to them, and resorted to branding Caribbean offshore financial services as havens for criminal activity. For us, this is a violation of our territorial integrity, our sovereignty and our economic rights. Saint Lucia accepts that it has an obligation to ensure that its financial services are not used by unscrupulous individuals and interests.

However, Saint Lucia cannot, in all good conscience, surrender its sovereignty to a governance system imposed by a few.

In the face of these selfish actions by developed countries and the myopia of globalization, the role of the United Nations in bringing order into the system has become even more pressing. Saint Lucia therefore renews its call for a rebirth of the United Nations system, not only as an organization concerned with peacekeeping operations and humanitarian missions, but also as an institution that is capable of effectively governing the global economic system in a way that ensures an equitable redistribution of the benefits of economic growth. We need a United Nations that will safeguard against global economic crises and promote the adoption of sustainable developmental policies.

In that context, and with the emerging spectre of a global economic recession, the upcoming United Nations Conference on Financing for Development becomes even more relevant, even more urgent. That Conference is of enormous importance to the small island developing States of the Caribbean, faced as we are by low aggregate gross domestic product, low domestic savings and investment capacity and undeveloped financial markets. The development agenda of the Caribbean region cannot proceed without the requisite financing, nor can it be sustained without an enabling international environment. We must all therefore commit ourselves to ensuring the success of the Conference.

Our renewed call for the rebirth of the United nations is further prompted by the observation that it is systematically being displaced as a source of guidance and as a fount of collective wisdom on global issues. We fear that if the United Nations continues to be marginalized in determining global development policies and strategies, then the concerns of developing countries will be excluded from the global agenda. A recent example of this is the decision not to include issues relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in the preparatory meetings for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. We see this as undermining the spirit of the United Nations resolution that convened the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados in 1994. Indeed, it was recognized then that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had not paid sufficient attention to the special circumstances of small island developing States.

There are two other examples of United Nations inaction that leave us very concerned. Saint Lucia laments the adoption by the United Nations of a watered down instrument on small arms. In small island developing States like Saint Lucia, growing economic instability has given rise to increased levels of drug-related crime. In the Caribbean region, small arms are used in most of the violent crimes that are committed against our law-abiding citizens. The global trade in small arms must therefore be stemmed in the interest of peace and stability. A weak small arms document was therefore not what we required.

We remain deeply concerned that the Plan of Action for the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism did not result in the decolonization of the remaining 17, mostly small island, Non-Self-Governing Territories. Accordingly, we request, as a matter of priority, that the necessary resources and expertise be provided to implement the long-standing resolutions on decolonization and the critical analyses called for in the Plan of Action of the present International Decade.

I close by extending on behalf of the Government and the people of Saint Lucia, our warmest congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the hard-working staff of the United Nations on the recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize. We regard this award as an eloquent testimony to the sterling efforts of the Organization to build a peaceful world. At the same time, we see the award as a challenge to the United Nations to remain resolute in its commitment to the multilateral framework and not to allow itself to become incapacitated by inaction, especially where the defence of human security is concerned.

We all recognize that the events of 11 September have brought about a new era in world affairs and new challenges for all of us, in particular for the United Nations. In the times that lie ahead the United Nations system must do more that it has done before. It must resist the use of force in situations where wisdom is needed. It must work harder at becoming a source of hope to the hopeless and a reservoir of power to the powerless. It must redouble its efforts to restore the preservation of humanity as the highest of all ideals.

The horror of 11 September has shocked some of us into establishing a coalition against terrorism. It is

time for the tragedy of underdevelopment to shock all of us into forging new coalitions for development. At this juncture, let us use this United Nations, energized by its Nobel award, to create these coalitions. Let us build a coalition in defence of the wretched of the earth — to end their hunger, to terminate their poverty, to eradicate their diseases and to forever banish their wretchedness.

**The Acting President**: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Tekle** (Eritrea): My delegation is taking the floor to exercise, with due respect, its right of reply to some of the charges levelled against my country by the Foreign Minister of Ethiopia. I shall refrain from expressing subjective views, and only refer to statements made by Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, on each of the charges made by the Minister. I shall leave the rest to you, Sir, and to the Assembly.

With regard to the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone, at a press conference on 18 April 2001 the Special Representative said,

> "There are things that we can do as the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and there are things that we cannot do. It depends on the willingness of the parties to negotiate with us and, finally, to agree to certain things. There are still problems, which we have to resolve insofar as the southern border of the temporary security zone is concerned ...
>
> "[The Ethiopians] told us before the 6 April [Military Coordination Commission] meeting that they had made a mistake when they gave us the redeployment points by leaving out this area of Irob. We corrected the line and then, when they completed their redeployment, we certified that they had redeployed. After a few days we discovered that they were present in the area at issue. That is the area that is six kilometres beyond the lines that we have drawn.
>
> "We issued a statement, as you said — a statement protesting the presence of the three companies in that part of Irob. I was invited with the Force Commander to go to Ethiopia to meet the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, where we were told that Ethiopia had always been in that area, that Ethiopia had never left the area and that that area is part of ... [Ethiopian] territory ... Therefore, they have redeployed there in accordance with the line of 6 May 1998.
>
> "We were told in certain terms that nothing — and I underline nothing — would move them out of that area. Therefore, as realistic people, we have decided that there is no use in trying to push the Ethiopians out of that area because they are not going to be pushed out of that area. Nobody wants to fight the Ethiopians out of that area, and therefore we have told the President [of Eritrea] that this is a typical candidate for the Border Commission. That is the only solution, because to mortgage the creation of the temporary security zone, and the progress of the peace process generally, to a resolution of the Irob issue would be tantamount to saying you do not want to create the temporary security zone, you do not want the peace process to go forward."

Who is appeasing whom? With respect to the increasing mobilization of Eritrean troops, the Special Representative was asked the following question during a press conference on 11 October:

> "Ethiopia said recently that Eritrean troops are in a state of high alert and that the troops have already been dispatched towards the border area and are preparing for another round of war, but Eritrea denies it. What is your comment?"

The Special Representative replied:

> "Well, we have investigated that. Let me remind you that [whenever] one or the other party gives us whatever report, we investigate. And therefore we have been investigating the allegations that the Eritrean army is on high alert. And so far, we have found nothing to suggest that the Eritrean Army is on alert. Even yesterday we were running around to make sure that we were not caught by surprise."

On the other hand, Ethiopia is systematically violating the letter and spirit of the peace agreement and jeopardizing the peace. Let me give two examples. The peace agreement provides for a speedy exchange of prisoners of war and other detainees. During a press conference on 9 August, the Special Representative responded to a question by saying,

> "As you know, the parties on 12 December signed the Peace Agreement in Algiers. According to article 2 of that Agreement, they are required to release prisoners of war. As you know, soon after signing the Agreement, they started releasing prisoners of war.
>
> "Ethiopians are saying that because the Eritreans are not satisfactorily accounting for the whereabouts of the pilot Petros and 36 others who have not been accounted for, they have decided to stop releasing prisoners of war. The other side, in retaliation, is doing the same. But as we have always said, and as the International Committee of the Red Cross says, you cannot hold this process up. You cannot say that because you are not satisfied with something, you are not going to release prisoners of war. That is contrary to the Geneva Conventions."

On the issue of landmines, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General went on to say:

> "We are pressuring everybody to give us landmine information. Eritrea has given us records for mines. Ethiopia has given us several hundred maps. We have never hidden the fact that we have been persuading Ethiopia to continue to cooperate with us in order that we can get all the records, all the maps, all the information they have so we know where these mines are, so people can live there safely".
>
> Eritrea rests its case.

**Mr. Kazhoyan** (Armenia): I have asked for the floor to exercise my right of reply to the statement made yesterday by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, during which he provided information that was not quite accurate, to say the least.

The statement of the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan was a blatant attempt to distort the evidence of its State-sponsored terrorism by reversing the roles of perpetrator and victim. Reversing these roles is nothing new. However, a large number of observers — governmental and non-governmental organizations, both international and domestic — have testified that it was the Azerbaijani authorities that either exterminated the non-Azeri population of Nakhichevan and Nagorny-Karabakh or created unbearable conditions for those people to live in. It was Azerbaijan that responded to the legitimate and parliamentary demands of the Armenian population of Nagorny-Karabakh with massacres and pogroms and, afterwards, with full-fledged war against the people of Nagorny-Karabakh.

It has been well documented that during that war, Azerbaijan was the first to use tanks, rockets, missiles, attack helicopters and combat aircraft. They were used not only against the Karabakh self-defence forces but also against the civilian population of Nagorny-Karabakh, as well as across the border on the Armenian side. When the Armenians of Nagorny-Karabakh responded by using mostly the same weapons, which they had captured from the Azerbaijani army, Azerbaijan decided to call their former victims "aggressors". What about the real aggressor who started it all and is now blaming everybody else but itself?

Truth is one and justice is one. Azerbaijan cannot lie to all the world all the time. Azerbaijan denies the people of Nagorny-Karabakh their inalienable right to self-determination, but meanwhile stresses — here I am quoting from yesterday's statement by the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan — that Azerbaijan

> "... stands for the speedy, peaceful settlement of conflict based on the norms and principles of ... the United Nations Charter [and] the Helsinki Final Act of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)".

At this stage, I wonder whether Azerbaijan stands for double standards in the application of the principles of the OSCE Helsinki Final Act, or whether the Minister is simply unaware that the principle of self-determination is one of those principles.

The memory of the Armenians and others — young and old, children and women, civilians and soldiers — killed in that war should prompt us to stop blaming each other and, instead, to look to the future and try to find an acceptable, full and lasting solution based on truth, justice and respect for human rights — a call that was conveyed by my Foreign Minister in his statement yesterday.

**Mr. Yamtomo** (Indonesia): My delegation is taking the floor in exercise of the right of reply with regard to the concern referred to by the representative of Papua New Guinea. My delegation would like to state that the Government of Indonesia firmly believes that the case will be investigated, with the aim of bringing to justice those responsible, in accordance with Indonesian law. We therefore urge others to respect the investigation process and not to interfere in it. We wish to assure the representative of Papua New Guinea that this case will receive the full attention of the Government, as it involves its own citizens. I should also like to emphasize the fact that this case is a purely domestic issue for the Government of Indonesia.

*The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.*

United Nations A/56/PV.56

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

56th plenary meeting
Friday, 16 November 2001, 9 a.m.
New York

*President:* Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

*The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.*

**Agenda item 8** (*continued*)

**Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, organization of work and allocation of items**

**Fourth report of the General Committee** (A/56/250/Add.3)

**The President**: In its report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that sub-item (f) of agenda item 21, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", also be allocated to the Sixth Committee, for the sole purpose of considering the question of the granting of observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the General Assembly.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to also allocate to the Sixth Committee sub-item (f) of agenda item 21, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", for the sole purpose of considering the question of the granting of observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the General Assembly?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 9** (*continued*)

**General debate**

**The President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Philippe Antonio, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti.

**Mr. Antonio** (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the President of the Republic of Haiti and of the Haitian delegation, I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. You may rest assured of the full support of the Haitian delegation as you carry out your functions.

I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, on the efficacy and talent he displayed in conducting the work of the Millennium Assembly.

Allow me furthermore to offer my warmest congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to the Organization on their receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. Above and beyond any other consideration, this reflects recognition of the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Organization to promote peace and development.

I also take this opportunity to convey, on behalf of the people and Government of Haiti, our sincere condolences to the bereaved families, and in particular to the Government and brotherly people of the Dominican Republic, following the tragic aeroplane accident in Queens, New York, on 12 November.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The Government of the Republic of Haiti firmly condemns the hateful acts carried out on 11 September in Manhattan, New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, which claimed thousands of victims. On this occasion, the Government offers its solidarity to the American people and Government and its support in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever it may occur and whomever its perpetrators, victims and promoters may be. These inhuman and blind acts, while eliciting grief and despair, attack the very underpinnings of the democratic system and do violence to international peace and security, freedom, human rights and the search for well-being and prosperity.

The international community already has at its disposal 10 conventions, complemented by two protocols, addressing terrorism in its various manifestations, not to mention two additional initiatives under consideration on the issue. The international legal instruments were recently strengthened by Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which provides the major guidelines for our common struggle. We all stand to gain by adhering to international legality. In that vein, the Haitian Government, notwithstanding its meagre resources, is committed to taking the measures necessary to ratify and implement these relevant legal instruments.

These legal instruments are indispensable to our common struggle against this scourge, to be sure, but it is also of the utmost importance that we begin to consider the social, economic, political and other factors that might spawn terrorism. The international community, under the auspices of the United Nations and the banner of tolerance and solidarity, must build a grand coalition against poverty, ignorance, want, hunger, social exclusion and marginalization. That task is more urgent now than ever.

It is time for the members of the international community to reach a consensus on Security Council reform. It is necessary to increase the number of the Council's permanent members on the basis of better geographic distribution. We must undertake an in-depth re-evaluation of the right of veto, the current form of which is barely relevant to international relations and the exigencies of the democratic imperative. We must also institutionalize transparency in the Council's working methods and procedures. The achievement of these goals will make the Organization more effective and strengthen its legitimacy and authority.

The Republic of Haiti urges States and peoples in conflict, especially in the Middle East, to embrace dialogue in order to find lasting peace.

Today, in a world led by financial markets, trade exchanges and investments of unprecedented scope, a number of developing countries are being marginalized from world economic developments. We must refashion cooperation for development if we wish to reverse their slide into marginalization and extreme poverty. We must, in partnership with the international community and all the actors concerned, revise our strategies and propose a common approach that will tackle the problem of inequality during the new millennium.

Thus, we are afforded the opportunity to implement all the commitments undertaken by our heads of State and Government during the Millennium Summit. More than 147 heads of State and Government solemnly committed themselves to deliver humanity from want, and to make the right to development a reality for all. It is incumbent on us to translate these commitments into concrete deeds.

The benefits of trade for development are recognized, but it is perhaps still necessary to ask ourselves if in the context of globalization the least developed countries do not find themselves in a dilemma. How can we seriously speak of free trade with countries that, for the most part, have little to trade. It is also necessary to increase their production and export capacities.

It is essential that these countries have access to markets where they can sell their products. There is the "Everything but arms" initiative of the European Commission, which we welcome, and we invite our developing country partners to do the same.

The Haitian Government welcomes the holding of the Conference on Financing for Development, which will take place during the first quarter of 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico. That Conference gives us the opportunity to formulate recommendations on the reorientation of cooperation for development, in particular concrete measures in the area of debt management, technological cooperation, trade, investment and the international financial system. The Haitian Government also welcomes the organizing of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which will take place next September in Johannesburg, and invites its partners to accept this concept of

partnership, in which the interlocutors hold dialogues as equals in a framework of mutual respect.

My Government reaffirms its faith in a democratic future for Haiti, and, out of conviction, will do everything necessary to consolidate and strengthen the rule of law. Democracy will thus remain one of the pillars of the Haitian Government's policies.

Haiti is now undergoing a crisis situation, which is the result of an electoral controversy. In fact, after the elections of 21 May 2000 for the reconstitution of the Chamber of Deputies, more than two thirds of the Senate and all of our local offices, the electoral observer mission of the Organization of American States (OAS), while acknowledging in a report that the elections took place in an acceptable and credible way, still uncovered certain irregularities in the way that the absolute majority required for the election of the eight candidates to the Senate had been calculated. What followed was the suspension of international assistance, the resumption of which is still conditional on resolving the post-electoral crisis.

As soon as he was elected, and even before his inauguration, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide committed himself to the path of dialogue, convinced that opposition is necessary for the proper functioning of institutions. It was in this context that President Aristide's eight-point letter of December 2000 was sent to the then President of the United States, Mr. William Jefferson Clinton. In fact, in his search for a negotiated solution, President Aristide encouraged initiatives on the part of sectors of civil society.

In addition, during the participation of the Haitian delegation at the Quebec Summit, where the member States of the OAS took note of the efforts made by the Government, our head of State reiterated once again his determination to find a negotiated solution to the crisis in Haiti.

Once again, in Costa Rica, during the twenty-first session of the OAS General Assembly in June 2001, President Aristide, in a letter to the President of the Assembly made proposals that were incorporated into a resolution adopted by the 34 members of the organization as recommendations for crisis resolution. Since then, the head of State and the Government of Haiti have done everything possible to effectively implement these recommendations.

The Haitian Government and the political organization Fanmi Lavalas, with a mediation role played the OAS general secretariat, have begun negotiations with Democratic Convergence, a political opposition group, with a view to reaching an agreement in the framework of the commitments made in Costa Rica.

During those negotiations, various proposals have been put forward, particularly: the resignation of the seven senators concerned in the OAS report; the shortening by two years of the term of office of all deputies; the shortening of the term of office of the senators elected on 21 May 2000; the putting together of a future provisional electoral council; the holding in November 2002 of early elections for all of the members of parliament involved in the points that I have just mentioned; and the holding of elections during the first quarter of 2003 for the local offices whose terms will expire in November 2003.

President Aristide, the Government and the Fanmi Lavalas party have demonstrated much flexibility in the framework of negotiations. Unfortunately, the Convergence remains intransigent and challenges the wording of the two last points, on the holding of elections. The Convergence is frozen in its position, called "option zero", which consists in simply annulling the elections of 21 May 2000. Thus, the impasse still exists; international assistance is still suspended.

Meanwhile, poverty rages in Haiti. The AIDS pandemic, having claimed 260,000 victims, means a loss in terms of the life expectancy of our population, which had been painstakingly increased. Maternal and infant mortality is clearly progressing. The figure of 500 out of 100,000 dying in childbirth and the infant mortality rate, which has risen to 61 out of every 1,000 births, remain very alarming. Given that children, women and men — an entire population — are dying for lack of means, of financial resources, would it be an exaggeration to speak of another form of economic terrorism that none dare reveal?

Can one justify the link between a contested method of tallying votes and the freeze on financing given to my country in the form of loans — loans on which we continue, despite everything, to pay interest — especially since we know that the legislative and local elections of 21 May 2000 were held to fill 7,500 vacant posts, that 29,000 candidates took part in

these elections, and that voter participation of 60 per cent was the highest since 1990?

The Republic of Haiti remains confident of its destiny. It appeals to the international community so that its members will understand that the survival of the people cannot be tied only to political manoeuvres. The Haitian Government is committed to a process of strengthening institutions and remains open to dialogue and all proposals that do not undermine the dignity of the Haitian people. Against this background, we welcome with satisfaction the letter of the Black Caucus of the United States Congress, of 9 November 2001, addressed to the current President of the United States, Mr. George W. Bush, which denounces the inflexible policies vis-à-vis Haiti that make economic cooperation dependent on unblocking the political process.

The Government is ready to do everything in its power to resolve the post-election crisis and put the country back on the path of development, but this cannot be done without the cooperation of the international community. To this end, it invites this community to join it in its daily struggle for survival, reconciliation and peace.

**The President**: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Igor Ivanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Ivanov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This session of the General Assembly is taking place in the shadow of an unprecedented challenge to humanity posed by international terrorism. We all must seriously analyse how this could have happened. However, it has already become perfectly clear today that the period of globalization and the threats and challenges to international and regional security that it brings with it make it urgent for of all of us to take fundamentally new approaches to international affairs.

We face a tough dilemma, whose solution will truly be of paramount importance. Either we work together to responsibly construct a genuinely just and democratic world order that can guarantee equal security and sustainable development for all States in the world, or we show ourselves to be unable to counter real threats to global stability and security.

The most important task of the international community today is to create a global system to counteract new threats and challenges, first and foremost among which is international terrorism. This topic was the focus of negotiations between the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir V. Putin, and the President of the United States of America, Mr. George W. Bush, which recently took place in Washington, D.C. and Crawford, Texas.

A universal anti-terrorist coalition has been formed. The Russian Federation is a responsible participant in this coalition. The creation of this coalition has involved the United Nations playing a very important role in consolidating and coordinating activities. It is precisely the United Nations that has the necessary universal character and authority to organize a response to the threats and challenges that confront mankind today.

The broad decisions taken by the Security Council and the General Assembly create a solid political and legal framework for efforts to neutralize the threat of terrorism. It is now important for these decisions to be implemented by all States.

If necessary, the use of the most decisive means against terrorists may be permissible, including the use of military force. The Charter grants that right. At the same time, this threat cannot be overcome by force alone. A comprehensive approach to eradicating terrorism would imply the use of the whole range of political, economic, financial and humanitarian measures.

The consolidation of the international legal framework for combating terrorism is now on our agenda. It is extremely important to rapidly complete and adopt the comprehensive convention on international terrorism and a convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

It would be of great importance to establish within the United Nations a mechanism to monitor the fulfilment by States of their treaty obligations concerning the suppression of terrorism.

We consider promising the idea to establish, under the aegis of the United Nations, a centre for coordinating assistance to States to resolve crises caused by terrorist acts. Such a structure could focus on providing consultative and material and technical support in managing the consequences of terrorist acts.

The Russian Federation also proposes studying the possibility of including in international law the

principle of the responsibility of States for their failure to take measures against terrorists in their territory or under their jurisdiction.

Of key importance in the success of the comprehensive fight against international terrorism is the maintenance and strengthening of strategic stability at both global and regional levels and strengthening the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The focus of the international community should continue to be on the interdependence and merging of international terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. The Russian Federation favours the rapid entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its additional protocols.

It is perfectly clear that the fight against terrorism is not aimed at any particular religion, civilization or culture. This was clearly demonstrated by the discussions on the dialogue among civilizations during the current session of the General Assembly. We also hope that a practical contribution in this area can be made by the implementation of the initiative put forward by Islamic religious leaders from the Russian Federation to organize an international conference entitled "Islam against terrorism" in Moscow.

Terrorism is rooted in the gap between affluence and poverty, both within States and in the international arena. Thus, the task now, as never before, is to ensure sustainable development throughout the world and to ensure that the social aspects of the globalization process are addressed.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies can do a lot to ensure effective rejection of extremism of all forms. We suggest that thought should be given to organizing, under the aegis of the United Nations, a world forum that would discuss what contribution civil society and, particularly, the mass media could make to combating terrorism.

International experience has shown that successful prevention and settlement of regional conflicts are an integral part of the counter-terrorist efforts of the international community. This is yet another compelling argument in favour of further developing and ensuring greater effectiveness of United Nations preventive and peacekeeping activities. In particular, the Russian Federation advocates the development within the United Nations of a comprehensive strategy aimed at reliably blocking channels for outside fuelling of the conflicts.

We need to ensure that there is regional cooperation in fighting these new threats. An example of such successful cooperation is that of the Commonwealth of Independent States, under the auspices of which a CIS anti-terrorist centre has been set up and is working effectively.

Today, the moment of truth has arrived for each of us. The Russian Federation is in favour of the international community taking decisions that can provide for strategic stability and equal security for all States, sustainable development and prosperity for all the peoples of the planet and peace and tranquillity for each family and each individual.

These noble aims can only be achieved jointly, by working cooperatively and uniting the efforts of the entire international community. The United Nations has a vital role to play in this regard. Our Organization was, and indeed remains, the most important instrument available to the international community, whose effective and responsible use will allow us to create a new democratic and just world order for the twenty-first century.

**The President**: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Patrice Trovoada, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and Community of Sao Tome and Principe.

**Mr. Trovoada** (Sao Tome and Principe) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text provided by the delegation*): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on behalf of the State of Sao Tome and myself on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, which testifies to the international community's esteem for and recognition of the Republic of Korea and you personally. Please accept our wishes for every success as you carry out your mandate. Let me also express our thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for the exemplary way he led the work of our last session.

I should also like to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, our Secretary-General, both on his resounding re-election and on the well-deserved and just awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to him and the

United Nations, reflecting their major contributions to the cause of peace and development.

This session is being held at a particularly important juncture in the history of international relations, when the entire international community is mobilizing to confront the devastating phenomenon of international terrorism, the scope and magnitude of which were evident in the 11 September attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., and in Pennsylvania, which took the lives of thousands of innocent people. At that time, Sao Tome and Principe expressed its total indignation at the criminal and monstrous acts committed against the American people, as well as its full solidarity with the American authorities and the families of the victims. We share the opinion that those responsible for these barbaric acts must be apprehended and punished, and that terrorist organizations supporting them must be dismantled by all necessary means.

We reaffirm our full readiness to cooperate actively at both the regional and international levels in the fight against terrorism, which is one of the major evils threatening world peace and security today. We hail all initiatives taken to contain the military action, justly launched against those who sow terror as well as those who shelter them in their territories, so as to avoid having innocent victims among the civilian population. We welcome the efforts of the international community to adopt a juridical instrument to make the fight against terrorism more effective in the context of a global strategy.

No one can doubt that this act of criminal, unacceptable and unjustified aggression, condemned throughout the world, requires a new dynamic in the fight against it, particularly within the United Nations. We note with satisfaction that important measures have been taken in that regard, notably by the Security Council in resolution 1373 (2001), of 28 September. Yet the manifestation of extreme violence in these recent attacks alerts us to the need to understand in a different and comprehensive way the great problems faced by mankind throughout the world, without losing sight of the merciless fight that must be waged against international terrorism in all its manifestations.

Despite the considerable scientific and technological progress recorded throughout history, which has permitted high levels of development, striking imbalances persist in a number of areas with regard to social and economic development, both within and among the countries, regions and subregions of the world. Witness particularly the situation prevailing in sub-Saharan Africa. A look at the statistics of economic and social conditions in the countries of that region is enough to reveal the urgent need to develop a front that, acting concertedly and collectively, can fight to eradicate their absolute poverty.

Faced with this scenario — rich countries on the one hand and poor countries on the other — one might wonder whether the political will exists to reverse this situation, which is dominated by selfishness and the interests of individuals, groups and States. Only thus can one explain the lack of cooperation, indifference and, indeed, the lack of sensitivity shown by the industries of developed countries in the face of real scourges that devastate thousands of people, making the countries of the South even more vulnerable. For example, I am thinking of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as other epidemics, such as hepatitis B and malaria.

The efforts of international organizations — notably the United Nations and its system, as well as certain non-governmental organizations — to help mankind cope with this painful situation must be visible.

Moreover, beyond the economic data reflecting the growth of poverty in Africa, the situation of our continent is worsened by the persistence of armed conflicts, particularly the crises in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and Angola, to cite only a few examples of the fratricidal war that afflicts us.

As to the situation in Angola, we reaffirm our urgent desire to see an end to the war in that fraternal country. We condemn the terrorist acts that have claimed countless lives, particularly among the civilian population, and we call for a renewed application of the terms of the Lusaka Protocol for conflict resolution.

In the context of conflict resolution, we welcome the efforts of the international community to find a solution to the East Timor question, as well as progress made in the process of emancipation of the Maubere people under the aegis of the United Nations. It is our great hope to see this brotherly people admitted to the United Nations as a full-fledged Member and to see a strengthened Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

We note with concern the escalation of violence in the Middle East. In our view, it is essential that Israel and the Palestinian Authority resume the negotiations on the peace process, the only way to find a just and peaceful solution that takes into account both the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the guarantee of security for the State of Israel.

Unfortunately, Sao Tome and Principe is still on the list of poor, least advanced or underdeveloped countries, despite the efforts of its people and the determination of its leaders to place it on the track of development. Today, my country is unquestionably a place of freedom and democracy where fundamental individual human rights are respected. The recent presidential elections, held in July this year, which brought Mr. Fradique de Menezes to the highest office of the State of Sao Tome, are irrefutable proof of democratic stability in our country. Nevertheless, the constraints arising from the inequalities that prevail in the new international economic order keep us from attaining a state of well-being and from creating more dignified living conditions for our people.

During the Millennium Summit last year, the heads of State and Government adopted in this Hall a very important text called the United Nations Millennium Declaration. I take pleasure in citing a portion of it:

(*spoke in French*)

> "we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs". (*resolution 55/2, para. 2*)

(*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text provided by the delegation*)

This Declaration takes on particular importance in the case of our country, where the future and well-being of children seem badly compromised, bearing in mind the atmosphere of terror, the horrors of war and the abuses of exploitation, famine and poverty. We must act now to protect our children. We must fight by every available means to ensure full respect for their fundamental rights. This is why we welcome with much satisfaction the Second World Conference against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, scheduled for next month, and the world summit on the future of children, to be held in May 2002.

Sao Tome and Principe considers globalization to be a phenomenon of interdependence, a unique opportunity to bring peoples together, not a political ideal driven by the dominant economic Powers. Thus we enthusiastically welcome the New Partnership for Africa's Development and share the certainty that this plan — based on our needs and the aspirations of our people for the future, and designed to find practical solutions to the economic and social problems throughout Africa — will be favourably received by our partners, notably those of the G-7/G-8, for implementation.

The environment is a fundamental issue for the survival of mankind, and it must continue to be the focus of special attention by the United Nations. We therefore stress the importance of the outcome of the recent seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held at Marrakesh. Every effort must be made to create and disseminate technology that can minimize the environmental impact of human activities and to mobilize the resources needed to implement the policies and strategies adopted in a range of international forums.

Today more than ever before, it is obvious that we need to change the working methods of the organs of the United Nations so that they can better respond to the demands of the day. As a universal organization, the United Nations must be open to all States. Here we are talking about international law, the sovereign conduct of relations with other States, and active participation, in a spirit of solidarity, in development efforts through cooperation and international trade relationships. That certainly applies to the Republic of China on Taiwan. We believe in the right to disagree, especially when disagreement is democratically expressed by people. We also believe that dialogue is the only way to ease tension wherever it is most acute.

The United Nations, which has always aimed to support the development efforts of all countries, especially the poorest, must play a key role in the quest for solutions to the major problems facing the world. It must do so through fostering determination and adopting appropriate measures to create a fairer, more human world: a better world.

**Address by Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

*Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

**President Macapagal-Arroyo**: Let me begin by congratulating Your Excellency, Mr. Han Seung-soo, on your election as President of the General Assembly. I am especially gratified to be addressing the Assembly when a distinguished Asian is again at its helm.

I congratulate as well His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan on the Nobel Prize that he, together with the United Nations, has received. That prize constitutes recognition by the international community of the indispensable role of the United Nations and of the necessary work it has done on the Secretary-General's watch towards world peace and justice.

At the most elemental level, we feel most deeply the sad and tragic impact of the recent inhuman acts of terrorism: the lost lives, the orphaned children, the widowed spouses, the parents struck with the unimaginable grief of outliving their children and, worse yet, of watching them die. As we watched the horror unfold, we felt as though it were happening to us — as indeed it was, for the United Nations is in a sense one family. The blow that was struck at this international city of New York was felt as directly by the rest of the world. As people the world over stopped to watch in horror as the twin towers came down, the world's economies ground to a virtual halt.

Business activity stopped, investments were withdrawn, markets shrank, tourism dried up, more jobs were lost, living standards dropped even further, destitution spread and the very conditions that favour terrorism spread and deepened. Our misgivings about a world slowdown deepened into certainty about a recession that will be felt most deeply by those least able to endure it: not just classes but whole countries. The average growth rate in the gross domestic product of developing countries could fall from last year's 5.5 per cent to 2.9 per cent. For most poor countries, that will translate to sub-zero growth.

The face of terrorism that this city saw over a month ago is a familiar one to Asians. It has taken a terrible toll in terms of the lives of our people and the economies of the region. It has destroyed our credit and has deterred investment. It has caused Asian Governments profound embarrassment at being caught flat-footed and unable to offer their citizens the most basic security. In the south-western part of the Philippines, it has taxed our resources and our patience to the limit, for terrorism is the argument of those who are not really interested in reasoning but only in getting whatever they want on their terms alone.

We know terrorism. We are fighting it in the south-western Philippines. The perpetrators of the first attack on the World Trade Center were apprehended by our police. Rather than dismembering our country and dispossessing our people of their homes, we have been negotiating with secessionist groups. But we have thrown the full weight of the law, including the use of force, at those who have resorted to terrorism. We know the enemy, and we know that these are not people you talk to; these are people you fight. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, there are those who will hate and who will kill even if every injustice is ended. You must fight them in the field, when they take to the field and hunt them in cities when they hide inside.

It was in the light of that experience in the south-western Philippines that we immediately condemned the terrorist attacks on the United States, for we recognized them immediately as desperate and despicable acts by that violent minority which seeks to enslave the world with fear. And indeed, they have given the world good reason to be afraid. The attack on the World Trade Center, which aimed to take the lives of the 50,000 people who worked inside it, shows us an enemy without pity, without compunction and prepared to use any means to achieve the greatest destruction.

The Philippines did not need to join the war on terrorism: it was in that war already, in the south-western part of our islands. The Philippines could not have done otherwise than to renew its commitment to fight terrorism in a wider field in the wake of 11 September. We know that this is an enemy that must be

fought everywhere so that it cannot again strike at will anywhere it pleases.

This is a fight between tolerance and bigotry, between reason and fanaticism, between law and anarchy, between justice and murder pretending to be just. In this fight, there is no side to choose but the one where the civilized nations of the world — long-time allies and former enemies — have chosen to stand united, not least here in this Hall.

The Secretary-General has declared that the 11 September attacks struck at everything our Organization stands for: peace, freedom, tolerance, human rights, and the very idea of a united human family.

I do not know if the future belongs to our side, but I am convinced that there will be no future if our side does not prevail in this fight — at least, no future that any of us would care to live in. In fact, it would not be a future in which most of us would be allowed to live. It would be a future where happiness was suspect, delight was blasphemy, beauty was a cause for shame and independent thought a capital crime.

But while terrorism cannot be placated, and no terrorist should be appeased, there is no doubt in our minds, either, that we must address the concerns that they pretend are the inspiration for their terrible deeds.

If the world can show that it will carry on, that it will persevere in creating a stronger, more just, more benevolent and more genuine international community across all lines of religion and race, then terrorism will have failed.

No, terrorism will not stop, but it will have failed. To stop terrorism, the terrorists themselves will have to be stopped. What we can do, however, is to strip them of their moral pretensions and take upon ourselves the causes that they have perverted.

No nation will indefinitely endure the yawning gap between rich and poor — a gap that is only growing bigger, not just within, but across the countries of the world. It is this growing disparity between the ever fewer rich and the ever-increasing poor that has given terrorism the freedom of movement and impunity from accountability that it has enjoyed.

Poverty can be reduced partly by national economic growth. But, more than that, societies have to adopt deliberate policies to ensure that the income levels of the poor rise faster than those of the rich.

Recent developments in the global economy have displayed the perils of overdependence on external markets. We must expand domestic demand and increase the purchasing power of the masses of our people.

This is largely the responsibility of each nation. We in the Philippines are addressing the affront of mass poverty through housing, education, lower medical costs, more efficient power, transportation and communications, infrastructure in the countryside, credit to small farmers and micro-industries, productivity, protection of the environment, and development of the areas farthest from our centre of political power and economic activity.

The international community also has a responsibility in the elimination of poverty. Commitments to devote a certain percentage of gross domestic product to official development assistance have a place. But the most effective, and least costly, anti-poverty measure on a global scale is for developed countries to open their markets wider to the products of the developing countries, including in particular those products turned out by poor people in the poor countries — agricultural commodities, textiles, clothing and footwear, as well as electrical and electronic appliances and components.

The global trading system cannot allow developed countries to subsidize heavily their agricultural exports while the developing countries are without the means to help their own farmers.

The recent Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) decided to launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. To ensure that the WTO does not lose credibility at this crucial time, our top priority is to ensure that the Doha round is truly a development round.

The effort to conquer poverty must embrace all cultures, all ethnic groups and all religious communities. Nations must allow all to preserve their own cultures.

We must make political autonomy accessible to regions that want it. At the same time, no one must be allowed to resort to terrorism to further political aims.

Respect for culture and religion, resources for development, openness to political autonomy within the sovereignty of the nation and rejection of terrorism are the foundations of the Philippine approach to our ethnic diversity and to the uplifting of our Muslim and tribal minorities.

The vision of nations where poverty is rapidly reduced cannot be attained in places where women and girls are mistreated and their rights trampled upon. As a woman head of State, woman head of Government and woman Commander-in-Chief of the world's fourteenth largest nation, I say: we cannot conquer poverty without liberating women and girls where they are oppressed. The gender gap is a part of the development gap and must be addressed with equal vigour.

The fight against terrorism, the struggle to eliminate poverty, the work on behalf of social and international justice, the strengthening of the rule of law, the promotion of tolerance and mutual respect, the practice of humanitarian compassion, the liberation of women, the never-ending quest for peace — these have long been on the United Nations agenda. We in the Philippines have been doing this in our region, in cooperation with our neighbours.

The heightened virulence of terrorism, the renewed sense of insecurity among the world's peoples and the alarming slowdown in the global economy have intensified the urgency and importance of our work. Together, let us get on with the job. It is serious. It is essential. It is urgent.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of the Philippines for the statement she has just made.

*Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nicolae Dudau, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova.

**Mr. Dudau** (Republic of Moldova) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to convey to you our warmest congratulations on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I am certain that your competence and active cooperation with United Nations Member States will pave the way for a successful and fruitful session.

Allow me also to join previous speakers in expressing our deep gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his outstanding work and for the professional manner in which he presided over the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly.

I should also like once again, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, to reiterate our warmest congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which was so well deserved, and for his re-election to another term of office. His tireless efforts in redefining the role of the United Nations in this changing world are certainly deeply appreciated and supported by my Government.

The barbaric terrorist attacks of 11 September have radically changed the international security environment. Terrorism has become the most serious and immediate threat to the security and stability of our States. A challenge was laid down, not only to the United States of America, but to the entire world community. We fully agree with the statement made by the President of the United States, Mr. George Bush, in his statement before this Assembly at the 44th plenary meeting, that "that threat cannot be ignored" and that "civilization itself — the civilization we share — is threatened".

The fight against international terrorism has clearly become a priority for the United Nations. Today we see a strong international coalition emerging which, in the short term, is determined to bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorist acts and, in the long term, to eliminate this evil from the face of the earth.

The Republic of Moldova, which immediately aligned itself with the ranks of this coalition, strongly condemned the indiscriminate large-scale terrorist attacks that took place in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Moldova has also unreservedly supported the actions undertaken by the United States in its legitimate self-defence and in accordance with the United Nations Charter and Security Council resolution 1368 (2001). Likewise, we support the global and multidimensional approach adopted by the United States in its war against terrorism.

The Republic of Moldova has demonstrated its political will to combat terrorist activities through concerted efforts with other countries in the framework of various regional and subregional organizations

Our Government has strengthened its counter-terrorism legislation in order to comply with relevant regional and United Nations conventions and with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Our country is also taking measures in order to speed up accession to most of the remaining specialized United Nations counter-terrorism conventions. This morning, I signed on behalf of my country the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

The tragic events of 11 September have shown that the international community must take further steps to resolve the longstanding international problems on which terrorism and violence feed. We must urgently address the conflicts around the world and eliminate their root causes and factors that can nurture the development of terrorism.

I feel obliged to add my voice to those who see the phenomenon of separatism as a root cause of conflicts and a threat to international peace and security. In a globalized and interdependent world, separatism affects the bases of multicultural societies and poses grave danger to the sovereignty and integrity of States. Like international terrorism, separatism emphasizes what divides rather than what unites us. As a country affected by separatism for many years, we have constantly noted this phenomenon and the connections it sometimes has with other serious criminal activities, including sometimes terrorism. This is why, in our opinion, this issue, among others, must be taken into account by the United Nations Member States in their efforts to elaborate and implement a comprehensive and efficient counter-terrorism strategy.

The fact that I am focusing on the issues of conflict settlement and separatism is not accidental. Over the years, my delegation has informed the Assembly of the efforts being made to resolve the conflict in the Transdniestrian region of the Republic of Moldova. However, I am obliged to note with regret the lack of any noticeable positive developments towards a comprehensive settlement. Despite the reasonable compromises on the part of the constitutional authorities in my country, the separatist regime continues to completely oppose any proposals to grant special status to the region as a constituent part of the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, the leaders of that region have given a unilateral interpretation to political documents worked out with the active mediation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Another matter of continuing concern is the fact that in recent years the illegal production of different types of armaments has been noted in this region. These armaments have reached other conflict zones through third countries, supporting terrorists, criminal groups and secessionist movements.

We should like to state once again that a complete and unconditional withdrawal of troops, munitions and armaments, as stipulated in the Istanbul OSCE Summit documents, would undoubtedly facilitate the peaceful and lasting settlement of this conflict.

In this connection, I would like to emphasize that my Government encourages the recent efforts of the Russian Federation to cut back on its weapons deployed in the Transdniestrian region of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Given the considerable progress that has been already made, we certainly hope that the process of destruction and removal of the weaponry will be completed before the Bucharest OSCE ministerial meeting this December. I would like also to express our gratitude to those Members of the United Nations that have contributed financially to the OSCE voluntary fund established in accordance with the Istanbul decisions.

The role of the United Nations in international peace and security remains an essential part of its global responsibilities. The Republic of Moldova reiterates its conviction that the best strategy for maintaining international peace and security is to eliminate the root causes of conflicts. In this regard, we fully support the Secretary-General's efforts to move into a culture of conflict prevention.

The submission of periodic regional reports to the Security Council on disputes of various types that may potentially threaten international peace and security is another important and necessary measure. The unequal attention given by the international system to different conflicts is still a matter of great concern. In order to be successful, preventive strategies must reach all regions in crisis.

The credibility of the United Nations is called into question whenever decisions mandating action in a particular crisis are not matched by timely deployment of peacekeeping forces. Experience in recent years has

shown that the United Nations capacity to meet an expanding and increasingly complex range of peacekeeping demands needs significant improvement. We are pleased to note that action has been taken to implement a number of practical measures proposed by the Secretary-General in his second report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Brahimi report on peace operations.

Moldova has already established the legislation and institutional framework for its future participation in the peacekeeping operations. I should also like to express the readiness of the Republic of Moldova to participate in the stand-by system, for which the institutional and technical preparations are currently in their concluding stage.

As we seek to enhance the United Nations capacity in conflict prevention and peacekeeping, we must also strengthen international cooperation for the promotion of sustainable development and the elimination of poverty worldwide. Development and poverty elimination are issues of tremendous importance to many Member States, including my own. Our economic development has been gravely affected by the illegal actions of separatists, as well by the negative consequences of globalization. These issues have been considered very important by our leaders at the Millennium Summit.

Since the beginning of this year the world economy has experienced a certain slowdown. In the aftermath of the incidents of 11 September, this tendency has been exacerbated. The Millennium Declaration recognized that the problems of both developing countries and countries with economies in transition have become even more acute, even tragic in recent months, as a result of globalization. We hope that developed countries will increase their support for us in dealing with our problems by granting greater assistance for development. Debt cancellation would play a significant role in allowing us to free up financial resources and redirect them towards stimulating our economies.

In meeting the challenges of globalization, the United Nations plays an indispensable role in international cooperation. We welcome its greater participation in development issues and in facing the tasks set out in the Millennium Declaration. These goals cannot be reached without significant financial support. The International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held next year offer a unique opportunity to find the resources required to meet those goals. We hope that the outcome of these two significant international events will be successful in this regard.

The Republic of Moldova remains open to all forms of cooperation and is willing to contribute, as much as possible, to reaching the common goals of sustainable development and economic stability. We consider that a comprehensive approach, based on the experience of other States and on the specific cultural character of a given country or region, will help us identify and apply the best strategy for sustainable development.

In order for the United Nations to remain relevant and credible, it must maintain a strong commitment to the continuing programme of reform and renewal. The reforms that have been undertaken and implemented in recent years have already done much to strengthen and revitalize the Organization. However, much remains to be done and, in particular, we need to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. The Republic of Moldova believes that this reform should be guided by principles of equitable geographic representation, democracy, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. It is on this basis that we will be able to modernize the Security Council and bring it into line with the substantial increase in the general membership of the United Nations.

In this context I would like once again to reiterate the position of my country with respect to the enlargement of the Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories: the Eastern European Group should be given one additional non-permanent membership seat.

Our country welcomes the process of revitalization and improvement of the General Assembly and, at the same time, supports efforts to restore the central role of the Assembly as a main representative body for debate at the United Nations.

This year the Republic of Moldova is celebrating the tenth anniversary of its independence. During these 10 years as a Member State of the United Nations, we have fully shared the common values of the Organization. We have achieved many significant results in our internal development; much remains to

be done, however. We have nonetheless laid down the foundations of a democratic society. This was not an easy task, but we have made progress. The most important achievement has been that we have laid down the foundations of a democratic society, with basic human rights and the rights of national minorities being respected. The main achievement has been the consolidation of the Republic of Moldova as a peace-loving independent European country.

The dramatic change of the situation in the international arena in the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September calls for a new vision and a redefinition of the specific mechanisms for realizing the fundamental objectives of the Organization, which spring essentially from the founding philosophy of the Charter of the United Nations. In this respect, the Organization should draw conclusions from its own past and, relying on permanent support from its Member States, accomplish new tasks in the light of the imperatives of the time. I join in expressing the hope that the proceedings of the General Assembly — which are absolutely necessary for the international community in the twenty-first century — will also make it possible to ensure that this process moves in a positive direction.

**The President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Hammoud, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon.

**Mr. Hammoud** (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, which is meeting under critical and exceptional circumstances. We wish you every success in your arduous endeavours. I also wish to thank your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri. In addition, on this occasion, I would like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the efforts he has made throughout the year. We hope that he will be able to enhance the prospects for peace, stability, and development in the world during his second term of office.

The whole world was shocked by the enormity of the tragedy that struck the United States of America on 11 September — the barbaric terrorist acts against New York City and Washington, D.C. These acts exacted a high toll among innocent civilians and plunged the peoples and countries of the world into an atmosphere of gloom and anxiety. We once again extend our condolences to the families who lost their loved ones; some of them were Lebanese, or American of Lebanese descent. We share their deep sense of grief and sorrow.

From this rostrum, I would like to reiterate Lebanon's condemnation of these terrorist attacks. Lebanon stands ready to cooperate seriously, positively and responsibly with the United States and the United Nations in the fight against terrorism, in accordance with the rules of international law and with the prerogatives of national sovereignty.

For a long time, Lebanon has suffered from Israeli occupation and Israel's terrorist practices. We resisted this occupation until it ultimately ended with Israel's withdrawal from most of our national territories. It is perfectly normal in this context to stress the need for distinguishing between terrorism, which we strongly condemn, and peoples' legitimate right to struggle for the liberation of their territories from foreign occupation on the basis of the United Nations Charter and General Assembly resolutions. As regards Lebanon, we have to refer to the April Understanding of 1996, an agreement which was reached under the auspices of the United States and France after Israel had carried out the Qana Massacre that same year, in addition to the Taif Agreement that had laid down the tenets of our national reconciliation. A series of Security Council presidential statements have given the Council's blessing to the Agreement. Both the Taif Agreement and the April Understanding recognized the legitimacy of resistance against the Israeli occupation.

Let me recall here that had Israel not invaded Lebanon on 14 March 1978, there would have been no Lebanese Resistance — which, of course, is the subject of our pride — to counter this invasion.

Had Security Council resolution 425 (1978) adopted on 19 March been implemented without delay, as stipulated in its provisions, the Resistance would not have been born.

Had it not been for widening the scope of the Israeli invasion of Lebanese territory and the subsequent occupation of Beirut in 1982, the Resistance would not have escalated.

Had it not been for Israel's persistence in occupying what it called "the security zone", no one would have had to resist it and ultimately force it to

withdraw in May 2000 from most of the territories that it had occupied.

Had Israel not occupied the Palestinian territories, there would have been no need for a courageous uprising against occupation.

It must be pointed out that Lebanon is determined to fight terrorism. We have acceded to 10 out of the 12 conventions relevant to the question of international terrorism. We stand ready to respond positively to any international initiative, including the convening of an international conference for this purpose, to arrive at a standard definition of terrorism. It would be wise not to link terrorism to a particular race or religion, particularly to Arabs and Muslims, if we want to avoid setting world civilizations and religions on a collision course. We can thus avoid falling into the trap designed by those who are pushing the world towards collision, conflict and strife.

Side by side with its Arab brothers, Lebanon is determined to exert additional efforts to combat terrorism and eradicate its various root causes. In 1998, Arab States successfully negotiated and concluded the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, a Convention with clear-cut purposes and objectives.

The events of 11 September have demonstrated that humanity has not yet reached its ultimate evolutionary stage. They also prove that unbridled global rejectionist movements and terrorist groups that know no boundaries and accept no restrictions are capable of undermining our confidence in everything we have achieved so far. They are working to establish what can be referred to as a "new world disorder" and global instability.

Under the circumstances, and given prevailing fears, a thorough look at what is happening in the Middle East conflict zone would clearly reveal the difficulty of realizing the objectives of peace and development promoted by the United Nations. In recent months, the world has witnessed continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, unjust and arbitrary Israeli practices, desecration of holy sites, blockades, killings, assassinations and displacements. Such acts continue with no international deterrence or control.

Intransigent Israeli policies, deviation from the Madrid principles and terms of reference, and stripping the peace process of its political content in favour of so-called Israeli security considerations indicate that projected solutions to the Middle East crisis are divided among many conflicting rationales. There is the rationale of a partial solution and that of a comprehensive solution; the rationale of basing a solution on force and that of basing it on what is right, just and grounded in United Nations resolutions; the rationale of achieving security at the expense of peace and that of making peace the foundation of security.

In the aftermath of 11 September, attention has focused on the need to step up the effort to find a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, a solution that should allow the Palestinian people to establish an independent Palestinian State on their national soil. It is our duty to recall that a just and comprehensive peace necessitates that we simultaneously address all aspects of the Middle East conflict. The Lebanese and Syrian tracks must not be separated from the track of the overall settlement. That track is stalled, and reviving it will require the devotion of additional efforts. The liberation of Lebanese territories from Israeli occupation must be completed. Israel must withdraw from the entire occupied Syrian Golan Heights to the line of 4 June 1967. The question of Palestinian refugees, their legitimate right to return, and Lebanon's right to oppose their resettlement on its territories must not be ignored. This opposition is grounded in the principles of fairness, justice and sovereignty.

In the light of the above, we believe that a comprehensive peace built on justice and on the resolutions conferring international legitimacy is the sole guarantee of the sustainability of any desirable solution.

There are two fundamental questions in Lebanon that are of direct concern to the United Nations: one is the mandate of the international forces in southern Lebanon and the other is the destiny of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

In paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 1365 (2001), which was adopted on 31 July, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the activities of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), taking into account its possible reconfiguration into an observer mission in the light of the developments on the ground, following appropriate consultations with the Government of Lebanon.

Due to the gravity of the situation, and in anticipation of the Secretary-General's report, it is important for me to stress from this rostrum that both logic and the realities on the ground call for maintaining Unifier's existing mandate without amending it or reconfiguring the mission into an observer force. On the contrary, we believe that UNIFIL's role must be strengthened, particularly as it has not yet fulfilled the entire mandate entrusted to it by the international community in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which was adopted on 19 March 1978. That mandate cannot be implemented by an observer force due to the following questions that are still pending.

The first pending question is the verification of the Israeli withdrawal from all Lebanese territories. It is a known fact that the United Nations did not verify the Israeli withdrawal from all Lebanese territories. It only verified the withdrawal of Israeli forces to a de facto withdrawal line, which became known as the blue line. That line is not in conformity with Lebanon's internationally recognized borders, a fact recognized in subsequent reports of the Secretary-General.

Therefore, the Shab'a farms, on the slopes of Mount Hermon, remained under Israeli occupation, together with three additional points along the line of withdrawal drawn by the United Nations. At the time, Lebanon expressed its reservations on these points. These territories are Lebanese lands and Lebanon reserves its natural right to restore them and to extend its sovereignty to them. Lebanon would like to stress here that it will stand up for every inch of its national soil and for all its rights to its water resources, in accordance with international law. In that regard, we must draw attention to the fact that Israel continues to violate Lebanese sovereignty on a daily basis. In his report issued in July of this year, the Secretary-General described these violations as provocative. Furthermore, Israel continues to increase the frequency of its threats against Lebanon and Syria.

The second pending question concerns the restoration of international peace and security. In his reports to the Security Council between May 2000 and July 2001, the Secretary-General recognized that UNIFIL had not fully implemented the task entrusted to it. He repeatedly said that there is a third task the international forces have yet to undertake, and on which UNIFIL will have to concentrate. That task is the restoration of international peace and security in the region. How can we speak of a third task yet to be completed by UNIFIL under Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and at the same time discuss the possibility of reconfiguring UNIFIL into an observer mission?

In that respect, we are duty-bound to recall that the security of the region is indivisible. We would be deceiving ourselves if we were to believe that peace and security can be restored to the region outside the context of a comprehensive overall solution to all aspects of the conflict on all its tracks. Such an undertaking requires an all-inclusive effort, not only by UNIFIL but also by the entire United Nations, which should be responsible for the enforcement of its resolutions, particularly resolution 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

From this rostrum, I call on the United Nations Secretariat and the Security Council to preserve UNIFIL's existing mandate. The timing is of particular importance, given the serious circumstances prevailing in our region and in the world. We must also recall that in May of this year the Security Council adopted a statement in which members acknowledged Lebanon's concerns and apprehensions, including those relating to the future.

Lebanon is tirelessly seeking to achieve a total Israeli withdrawal from its territories. At the same time, it attaches great importance to the release of the Lebanese people kidnapped by Israel during its occupation of our land and thereafter detained in Israeli jails. They remain incarcerated in Israeli prisons as hostages, in contravention of international laws and instruments, particularly the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the subsequent Protocols thereto.

The 130,000 landmines that were left behind by the Israeli occupation are still killing, maiming and harming scores of civilians in Lebanon. They curtail their freedom of movement and obstruct their work. We consider this to be a continued — albeit indirect — form of occupation of Lebanese territories by Israel. In the light of this situation, the United Nations and the international community should make a greater effort to compel Israel to hand over all maps and records disclosing the locations of the mines, which have to be cleared as soon a possible.

However, with respect to the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who have been provisionally hosted on Lebanese land ever since their

expulsion from their homes in Palestine — and for whose final status the United Nations bears essential responsibility — we reiterate our demand for a just solution to their cause, on the basis of the implementation of their right to return and of our refusal to resettle them in Lebanon.

In this regard, it behoves us to remember that the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon would constitute a time bomb that would jeopardize the peace, security and stability in the Middle East; such refugees will relentlessly seek to return to their homeland and Lebanon is unable to integrate them, given the precariousness of its own internal equilibrium and the fact that provisions of its national pact do not allow for any form of resettlement.

Furthermore, Lebanon appeals for greater international attention to enable us to provide urgently needed assistance that could help return our liberated lands to normalcy, restore economic balance and provide opportunities for growth after long years of occupation and destruction.

This is an era of responsibility and accountability for the world, but accountability cannot be selective, nor can it be based on double standards. During the long years of occupation of the Lebanese territories, Israeli bombardment and the destruction that ensued killed thousands and injured and disabled thousands more. Our infrastructure, vital facilities, houses, schools, farms and bridges were destroyed and our growth and development were hindered. Lebanon must therefore be adequately compensated. Lebanon will spare no effort in appealing to the relevant international political and judicial organs to request that Israel make reparations for the damage resulting from its acts of aggression.

It may be useful to recall here that Israel did not withdraw from most of the Lebanese territories of its own accord; neither did it withdraw in compliance with the decision of an international authority or in response to a political requirement that remained on the table for over 22 years. Rather, it withdrew under pressure from the Lebanese resistance, which was embraced by the Lebanese State. It withdrew because of the steadfastness of the Lebanese people. Its withdrawal was not a voluntary démarche for peace, as some would have it. The withdrawal was a measure taken to avoid peace, and instead to seek alleged security at the expense of the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace.

Lebanon is a democratic Arab country, open to the world, with a civilization that goes back thousands of years. Thanks to our diverse social composition, our experience is informed by coexistence and consensus. It is a unique experience, rarely paralleled in our world today. We call on the Assembly to mobilize the forces of peace and justice in order to redress the historical injustice inflicted upon the Palestinian people. The Assembly must bring about a just and comprehensive solution to one of the most complex and dangerous regional conflicts in the Middle East. It is a conflict that has depleted the resources of its people, hindered its progress and stunted its contributions to the world. This solution will unfetter its creative capabilities and enable it to develop a global partnership free from fear, injustice and terror.

My country is proud to be hosting the next Arab Summit, to be convened in Beirut in March next year. Preparations are already under way to receive the Arab monarchs and presidents. We will also be hosting the Ninth Summit of the International Organization of la Francophonie in the fall of 2002, under the heading, "Dialogue among cultures". Lebanon is a founding member of the League of Arab States, the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie. Lebanon, which participated in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is capable of proving that it can reassert its active presence and again take a pioneering role at the regional and international levels. We come from a time-honoured civilization, and are blessed by unique and distinguished experience of coexistence. We will put this to the service of the noble objectives of the United Nations.

**The President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sahr Matturi, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone.

**Mr. Matturi** (Sierra Leone): My delegation extends to you, Sir, its warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of this body at its fifty-sixth session. Given your impressive credentials, we are confident that under your guidance we will conclude our deliberations successfully. I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, who

admirably conducted the affairs of the epoch-making Millennium Assembly last year.

Let me also warmly congratulate our indefatigable Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his reappointment to a second term of office and on his award, with the United Nations, of the 2001 Nobel Prize for Peace. As citizens of the West African subregion, we in Sierra Leone are proud of his stewardship. Sierra Leone is indeed indebted to him, the staff of the Secretariat and the United Nations family for their invaluable support of our effort to secure peace and stability in my country.

Forty years ago, on 29 September to be exact, Sierra Leone was admitted as the one hundredth Member of the United Nations. During the period that followed, we made our own modest contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. We have faithfully adhered to the purposes and principles of the Charter. We have practised, and continue to practise, tolerance and good-neighbourliness. Our faith in the Organization remains as strong as it was 40 years ago.

At the same time, the United Nations and its agencies have done a lot for the people of Sierra Leone. As President Kabbah told the Millennium Summit last year, in the course of its membership, Sierra Leone has tested the capacity of the United Nations to respond to major challenges, especially in the areas of peacekeeping, through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), and of humanitarian law, through the proposed special court to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of Sierra Leonean law, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Sierra Leone. In conveying our sincere thanks to the Organization and the rest of the international community for their support, my delegation expresses the hope that Sierra Leone and the United Nations will continue to work closely for peace, security and sustainable development in the coming years.

Sadly, this session of the General Assembly is taking place in the aftermath of the despicable acts of terrorism inflicted on our host country on 11 September 2001 — acts that claimed the lives of thousands of Americans and of the nationals of 86 other countries. As we share their grief and renew our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and the Government of the United States, we Sierra Leoneans are reminded of that ominous day in January 1999 when over 5,000 innocent civilians were brutally killed during the rebel onslaught on our capital city. Hundreds of others, including children and young girls, were abducted or raped or had limbs deliberately amputated. Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is deplorable and must be eradicated. My delegation would like to assure this Assembly that we shall do everything within our power and available resources to support the current multilateral counter-terrorism effort under the aegis of the United Nations.

The new emerging coalition to counteract the scourge of terrorism is absolutely necessary. However, the Sierra Leone delegation strongly believes that we should also strengthen existing coalitions or build new ones against those forces that continue to kill millions of children and adults throughout the world every single day. We know these forces. We know their vicious and destructive powers. Hunger, poverty, malnutrition, malaria, HIV/AIDS, brutality and intolerance — these are but a few of them.

Sierra Leone calls upon this Assembly and the entire international community to use the current international solidarity against terrorism to translate the Agenda for Peace, the Agenda for Development, the Millennium Declaration, the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children and similar strategies and goals into a series of new coalitions: a new coalition against childhood diseases; a new coalition against poverty and human underdevelopment; a new coalition against the scourge of HIV/AIDS and malaria; and a brand new coalition against the accumulation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

There has been a marked improvement in the situation in Sierra Leone. The serious humanitarian crisis still prevails, but is gradually subsiding. Thousands of ex-combatants have been disarmed and demobilized. Government authority and civil administrative services are gradually being established in areas previously occupied by rebels. Our restructured army is now truly professional, thanks to the intensive training programme directed by the Government of the United Kingdom.

By all accounts, we can say that the overall security and safety situation is one of great expectation. In the coming months, the people of Sierra Leone will once again start to enjoy to the fullest extent their basic

right to life — a life free from brutal armed rebellion such as that provoked and abetted by external forces and fuelled by blood diamonds for 10 long years. In this connection, my delegation would like to express our sincere gratitude to the United Nations and its agencies, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UNAMSIL troop-contributing countries, the United Kingdom and other friendly nations for their individual and collective contributions to the peace process in Sierra Leone.

Allow me from this rostrum to express the condolences of the Government and people of Sierra Leone for those brave and dedicated ambassadors of peace from the United Kingdom, Zambia, the Ukraine and Bulgaria who lost their lives in the recent helicopter accidents in my country.

Despite our optimism for peace and stability in Sierra Leone, past experience of adventurous attempts by the rebels to renege on their obligations under peace agreements have taught us a lesson: We have to remain constantly vigilant. The safety and security of the people will remain high on our national agenda, as will the process of consolidating the peace through sustainable development. This is why we would like the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to continue to generate the necessary international support for our post-conflict and peace-building effort.

In this connection, we would like to draw the attention of the international community and those who assist us in the implementation of our disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme to the fact that the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants will soon come to a successful end. However, the process of reintegration remains crucial. We could lose the gains we have made in the peace process if we allow the reintegration of ex-combatants to collapse for lack of adequate funding. As President Kabbah pointed out recently, we also have tens of thousands of young people who have never seen, touched or used an AK-47 rifle or a rocket-propelled grenade. They, too, are waiting to be integrated into the mainstream of our economic and social sectors.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to appeal to the international community, as a matter of urgency, to help us remove some of the root causes of conflict by increasing support for our reintegration and integration programmes for the benefit of youths. We should no longer allow the legitimate social and economic needs or grievances of these young people to be exploited by ruthless warlords whose sole objective is to drain our precious mineral resources for their own selfish ends.

Speaking of diamonds, I would like to inform this Assembly that our diamond certification system, established under Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), has so far been a major success. First, there has been a substantial increase in revenue from legitimate diamonds since the system was established just over a year ago. Secondly, it has also helped to reduce the incidence of an old problem that preceded the phenomenon of conflict or blood diamonds — namely, smuggling. My Government is in the process of updating the status of the certification system in its third report to the Security Council through the Committee that is monitoring the implementation of resolution 1306 (2000).

The sacrifices we have made for peace in Sierra Leone are not for Sierra Leoneans alone; they are also in the interest of peace and stability in the Mano River Union triangle in particular and the West African subregion as a whole. The recent rapprochement at the ministerial level, followed by meetings of the Joint Security Committee and the initiative launched by the Mano River Union Women Peace Network in the three countries — Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone — augur well for the proposed Mano River Union summit meeting. Meanwhile, I can assure the Assembly that President Kabbah remains committed to his determination to help restore adherence to the principle of good-neighbourliness in the Union. This should lead to a revitalization of economic cooperation programmes among the three countries. We must admit that conflict and tension in the Union have had a negative impact on the ability of ECOWAS to concentrate on the principal objective for which it was created, namely, economic cooperation and development.

*Mr. Balzan (Malta), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

We are aware that primary responsibility for alleviating poverty, stimulating economic growth and reducing conflicts and their often disastrous consequences lies in the hands of the developing countries themselves. We are also aware that development requires sound fiscal policies and rational management of both our human and natural resources.

However, the international consensus is that sustainable development also requires greater cooperation between developing and developed countries in such areas as trade, debt relief and external financing. In this regard, Sierra Leone, one of the least developed countries in the world, eagerly looks forward to the results of the forthcoming Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

There are many pressing and unresolved problems on the international peace and security agenda of the United Nations. One of them is the situation in Palestine. It remains the core issue in the search for peace in the Middle East. In our view, it also breeds tension, and directly fans the flames of war in other parts of the world. In the current state of affairs it is no longer enough to speak about the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. They have a right to an independent State of their own. In short, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State is well overdue. In terms of international peace and security, we cannot afford any further delay.

Sierra Leone is obviously not a nuclear Power. However, as a member of the human family, we are concerned about the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Indeed, we believe that these weapons pose the greatest threat to human survival. Therefore, we shall continue to support universal adherence to regional and international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. For instance, Sierra Leone recently ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which we strongly believe is central to the question of the vertical, or qualitative, proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We are also seriously concerned about the proliferation of conventional arms, including those that have brought untold suffering to the people of Sierra Leone during the past 10 years.

Last July, at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, we pleaded in vain for action to prevent the transfer of these weapons to non-State entities such as terrorists and rebels who commit atrocities against innocent civilians. The recent terrorist attacks and the awareness that biological weapons in the hands of such non-State entities pose a threat to us all should, in the view of my delegation, prod those Member States that were unable to support our plea last July to seriously reconsider their position on this important issue of arms transfers to non-State entities. We also need their full support in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at that important Conference.

In conclusion, my delegation is convinced that the international community has at its disposal the instruments, institutions, strategies, targets and road maps for counteracting and eradicating terrorism, HIV/AIDS, malaria, hunger, malnutrition and other deadly forces, through closer multilateral cooperation.

Let the fifty-sixth session of this Assembly, which was interrupted by the common enemy of terrorism, go down in history as the new multilateral cooperation session, one that should inspire all nations, large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear, to deal resolutely with the other common enemies of the human race.

**The Acting President**: I now call on Mr. Anastase Gasana, Chairman of the delegation of Rwanda.

**Mr. Gasana** (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me, on behalf of the Rwandan delegation, to join previous speakers in extending from this rostrum of the United Nations our sincere and warm congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election as President of the General Assembly at the fifty-sixth session. I should also like to take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to his predecessor for the farsightedness with which he led the work of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I also wish, on behalf of my Government, to extend my warm congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election as Secretary-General of our Organization. His remarkable efforts in strengthening the role of the United Nations and his numerous initiatives to resolve conflicts have been eloquently attested to by his election to a second term of office, and even more by the Nobel Peace Prize that has just been awarded to him.

This session began in a very tragic climate in the wake of the cowardly and ignoble acts orchestrated by enemies of international peace and security. Those terrorist acts led to the deaths of thousands of innocent victims in the cities of New York and Washington. This was a very heavy blow to the Government and the

people of the United States and also a challenge to the United Nations and to the entire international community.

The Government of Rwanda learned of these ignoble acts with indignation and consternation, and has presented its condolences to the American Government and the families directly affected. The Rwandan Government reiterates its condemnation of terrorism and remains open to all initiatives designed to combat all forms of terrorism. It is in this spirit that my country unreservedly supports all the resolutions adopted against terrorism, in particular resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September, and we reaffirm our determination to implement them.

The acts of 11 September 2001 are a challenge to the United Nations and to each of its Member States. Since the United Nations is the crucible of international peace and security, and since terrorist groups take innocent human lives, it is up to every Member State, every truly human organization and every person who cherishes peace and justice to fight as vigorously as possible against such a terrorist group, no matter what its pretext, no matter how powerful it may be. When we say no matter how powerful, we know what we are saying, having been victims ourselves.

We were victims of the terror not of just any organization, but of a State that in reality became a non-State, but with all the State machinery available to it to fight the very people whose protection was its most fundamental duty. Rwanda and its people lived under the terror of a murderous, terrorist and genocidal State for three months. This reign of terror by a State, as the Assembly well knows, took more than 1 million human lives in 1994. The instruments of this blind, merciless terror, whose overwhelming result was genocide, are well known: the organization of paramilitary militias commonly known as the Interahamwe, and the former Rwandese Armed Forces, known as the ex-FAR. From this rostrum we call for these two organizations, which for a decade have been veritable killing machines, to be duly listed as terrorist groups to be fought and pursued throughout the world.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, which since 1994 has been harbouring these forces of evil, has fed them, has provided them with arms and munitions and has allied itself with them, must respond to the Security Council's repeated appeals to stop all support for the negative forces on its territories, including the Interahamwe and ex-Far, which planned and carried out genocide in Rwanda.

With regard to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the Great Lakes region in Africa, my country is determined to implement the Lusaka Agreement, which, with respect to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has two important components: the inter-Congolese dialogue, which should lead to a political solution to the Congolese crisis, and the disarmament and withdrawal of negative forces, which should lead to peace on the Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundi borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We wish to note with great satisfaction, the actions of the sisterly Republic of South Africa, which, given the failure of inter-Congolese dialogue in Addis Ababa — because of, among other things, lack of financial resources — generously offered food and lodging to over 300 Congolese delegates going to that greatly anticipated inter-Congolese forum. We wish also to congratulate the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD)-Goma and the Mouvement pour la libération du Congo (MLC)-Gbadolite on their fine initiative to create a special force to carry out the disarmament and disengagement of negative forces under their control on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and on having invited the Kinshasa Government to join this initiative.

Regarding human rights, we would like to reaffirm our attachment to the rule of law in international relations. We are determined to strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Government of Rwanda welcomed with great interest the report on human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is regrettable, however, that the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Roberto Garretón, was not present when the report was submitted on 8 November 2001. Because of his absence, no real debate between the parties concerned and the Rapporteur was possible. Once again, my delegation finds this highly regrettable.

The report on human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo contains numerous gratuitous allegations, including one on the alleged annexation of that country. We would like to recall here that the regular Rwandan army did not cross borders into the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to annex the country, as the report claims, but, as we have

explained and demonstrated a number of times, to ensure the security of our territory and our population. We acted in the context "of the inherent right of individual ... self-defence" of a country, as we are authorized to do under Chapter VII, Article 51 of the Charter.

Indeed, security in the north of Rwanda has been and continues to be constantly disrupted by the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe militia that committed the genocide in 1994 and that are using Congolese territory as their rear base in order to repeat their gruesome deeds. These armed groups are infiltrating Rwanda and killing thousands of innocent people. We hope that phase III of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), in close cooperation with the initiative of the RCD Goma-MLC Gbadolite, will lead to the complete disarmament of these groups and to stability and peace in the Great Lakes region.

We are pleased to note the establishment of a Transitional Government in Burundi. We believe that this is a major step towards the reconciliation to which our brothers, the people of Burundi, aspire. Today the Great Lakes region is seeking solutions to the conflicts that undermine it. May the example of Burundi, under the inspiration of President Nelson Mandela, bear fruit in the general interest and for the benefit of the people of Burundi and Africa as a whole.

Also regarding Africa, we feel that a definitive solution to the problem of Western Sahara should also be found.

We would like to see peace in the Middle East. The question of Palestinian refugees, which is several decades old, needs to be re-examined. Indeed, the existence of an independent Palestinian State, alongside an independent Israeli State assured of its existence as such is necessary for peace in the Middle East. The friends of the Israelis and the Palestinians within the United Nations, including us, ought rather at this stage to work on cultivating and strengthening relations of friendship and cooperation between these two fraternal States — the Israeli State and the Palestinian State. We are anxious to start work on this noble task.

Aside from Africa and the Middle East, we are pleased to note the significant progress made on the Korean peninsula, where both Koreas have shown encouraging signs of reaching a final settlement of a conflict arose in the context of the cold war.

This fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly is the first after the Millennium Summit, and thus should follow it up and lay the new foundation for the future of mankind. The Summit stressed, among the values that underpin international relations and respect for the fundamental principles of the Charter, the role that the United Nations ought to play and recommended the creation of a propitious climate for the development of the least developed countries that were not yet on the path towards globalization.

Throughout this general debate poverty and the problem of debt have been stressed as major obstacles to development and thus to entry into the era of globalization. Globalization, with its advantages for some and problems for others, does not seem to be able to resolve the problem of the gap between the rich and poor countries. To the contrary, the gap between them continues to grow. The marginalization of poor countries in international trade and the debt burden have severely hampered their efforts for development and have exacerbated their poverty. This is why the United Nations needs to define policies for the development of all and adopt international measures to support poor countries in the field of investment. Such measures should also be aimed at cancelling debt and ensuring adequate integration of these countries into the world economy.

In this context, we call on the United Nations to reconsider the report submitted to the Security Council by the Independent Inquiry led by Mr. Carlsson, former Prime Minister of Sweden, on which there has been no follow-up to date. As a Member of the United Nations, we believe that the Organization to which we belong should undertake a follow-up to this report that defines well the need for economic and social reconstruction in post-genocide Rwanda.

**The Acting President**: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Enele Sopoaga, Chairman of the delegation of Tuvalu.

**Mr. Sopoaga** (Tuvalu): I am honoured to address the General Assembly. Speaking on behalf of the people and the Government of Tuvalu, I extend Tuvalu's greetings to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and our congratulations to the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly on their election. I

also pledge Tuvalu's full support and cooperation during their term of office.

As we come to the end of this general debate, we are still overshadowed by the loss of many innocent lives and property as the result of the barbaric terrorist attack on America in September. We are further saddened by the losses earlier this week resulting from the plane accident in our host state, New York, and our host country, America. Tuvalu therefore joins others in reiterating to the people and Government of America our strong condemnation of the terrorist attacks and our pledge of strong solidarity with the United States of America.

Let me also convey Tuvalu's deepest sorrow and sympathy to the families of the victims of the plane crash, and offer our prayers to the people and Government of America, and equally to the people and Government of the Dominican Republic. We wholly share their bereavement and grief.

As the newest Member of the United Nations, having joined on the eve of the historic Millennium Summit last year, Tuvalu is more than ever aware of its responsibilities to the United Nations and what the Organization stands for. In June this year, Tuvalu established its Permanent Mission here in New York. Although this has been costly, Tuvalu believes the cost is offset by what the United Nations stands for. Our presence in the General Assembly reflects a basic belief we hold true: that the United Nations, through its enfranchising activities, can help Tuvalu and other countries like us by being an advocate with regard to the issues that concern us most.

Tuvalu is proud that the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001 was awarded to our Secretary-General and the United Nations itself. This award is a telling recognition of the vast contributions the United Nations has made in so many fields and on so many fronts: to peace around the world; to the protection of the individual, no matter his or her origin or circumstances; and to the upholding of the basic United Nations principle that every human being should have every opportunity to lead a better and more fulfilling life. We congratulate the Secretary-General and the Organization for this recognition.

There is no doubt in Tuvalu that peace and stability are indispensable to the well-being of freedom-loving people everywhere. The world cannot ignore threats to peace and stability, no matter what their causes may be, be they economic, social or environmental. The terrorist attacks in the United States of America and what has happened around the world since 11 September have made those of us here in this great Hall today feel very anxious. However, the very cause of this anxiety points clearly to the proper role of the United Nations. The General Assembly must be a strong advocate of what the Secretary-General, in his new road map, calls a new "culture of prevention".

In our view, pursuit of this new culture is worthy and must take advantage of the new spirit of cooperation that is now emerging to facilitate the elimination of the causes of terrorism and threats to peace and stability. In this regard, it is imperative to address problems in an open and representative dialogue based on consensus and mutual respect and understanding.

The consensus-building approach that we in the Pacific region often call the "Pacific way" may well prove useful in our collective venture for universal cooperation. Tuvalu is committed to its obligation to adhere to the United Nations resolutions to eliminate terrorism, and thus is taking steps to accede to the 12 United Nations and international conventions on terrorism. But to honour such obligations in practice is easier said than done. We need technical and financial support from the international community to build up our legislative, surveillance and enforcement tools if we are to have any hope of meeting these obligations beyond our present capabilities.

Also, we must not lose sight of the need for strong coalitions to deal with other pressing global issues, including conflicts and wars; the challenges of globalization; poverty and underdevelopment; and the effects of environmental degradation and climate change.

Universal cooperation against threats to peace and stability cannot, however, be fully achieved as long as the United Nations lacks the will to recognize fair and just representation within it of a democratic and economically developed State with a population of 23 million. The Republic of China on Taiwan is also suffering in the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks, having lost innocent lives as well as property. Like us, they suffer from the onslaught of natural disasters; epidemics and diseases, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic; and other threats of instability.

Yet in all these crises, and despite their enormous contribution to the world economy and international development — including technological advancement — as well as their consistent demonstration of international responsibility, the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan have been left to fend for themselves, denied the right to proper representation and collaboration, not only in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, such as the World Health Organization, but in nearly every other intergovernmental body. The voice with which they could share their plight and thereby benefit from world cooperation is silenced. However, the irony is that for more than 50 years, no authority other than the Republic of China on Taiwan itself has had full sovereign control over Taiwan, its population and the running of its affairs. To visit the country, for example, one must have immigration papers issued by its own authorities.

While we welcome the wise decision of the World Trade Organization last week to admit the Republic of China on Taiwan, it is Tuvalu's strong view that the United Nations must take the lead and seriously reconsider United Nations membership for the Republic of China on Taiwan, beyond the politics of exclusion and on the basis of the reality of things.

In Tuvalu and many other countries in the Pacific, we know that our economic vulnerability is fertile ground for forces of terror that can threaten the security and survival not only of the islands, but also of the region and the world. We are worried about the growing global interdependence and what that may bring to our shores. We need to improve our ability to share and disseminate information on transnational crimes, particularly those involving drug trafficking, money laundering, bogus investments, and other dangerous and dubious schemes that often arrive in the Pacific islands under the pretext of being legitimate.

We believe that, if we are left on our own, these threats will continue to expose Tuvalu and other Pacific island countries to forces outside our control. It is vital, therefore, that individual Pacific island Governments be given the back-up that is needed to boost their ability to tackle security threats and fight crime. The existing regional security arrangements under the Pacific Islands Forum and its sister regional agencies in the Pacific can, indeed, play a vital role. However, they need to be further strengthened to enable them to complement national security efforts more effectively. Further solidifying of cooperation between our regional organizations and the United Nations, moreover, is fundamental to the success of national and regional efforts vital for regional and global security.

I should like to add here that Tuvalu highly commends the role played by the United Nations and other international organizations and major countries in helping restore peace in the Pacific following the recent turbulence in the region.

Tuvalu is not in a good position to take advantage of the opportunities offered by trade liberalization. Like many island countries, Tuvalu currently lacks the know-how, trained people and adequate infrastructure to reap the benefits that are enjoyed here. If there is benefit for Tuvalu in a free trade world — and we believe there is — then surely Tuvalu must have in place the means that would allow us to reap that benefit.

In more ways than one, small island developing States such as Tuvalu are at the sharp end, the cutting edge, of development. For us, overseas development aid is indispensable to the development and sustenance of basic services necessary for security and survival. Our priorities continue to be education, health services and fresh water.

While we commend with great appreciation the generosity of our development partners, particularly our traditional partners, it has to be noted that Tuvalu and other small island developing States, like the landlocked and least developed countries and other developing countries, will for some time continue to rely on external financing through official development assistance to address their unique development needs.

In our view, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, both of which will be held next year, must also capitalize on the premises laid out under the reviewed Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the Secretary-General's road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration as the key tools to address the unique circumstances and vulnerabilities of small island developing States. Ultimately, this must lead to more effective delivery of assistance that is flexible and more responsive to the sustainable development needs

of small island developing States and of developing countries in general.

With limited exploitable resources, Tuvalu, like many other small island developing States, relies heavily on the surrounding seas for its food security and economic development. The proper protection of the oceans from hazardous pollution is therefore vital, and the sustainable management and exploitation of fisheries and other marine resources is extremely important to our sustainable development and survival. Building local capacity to conserve, manage and harvest marine resources in a sustainable manner is crucial and should therefore be supported.

As has already been said in this debate, the biggest long-term threat to the people of Tuvalu is posed by the effects of climate change, in particular rising sea levels. Recent reports released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have confirmed beyond doubt the correlation between accelerated atmospheric warming and sea-level rise. In Tuvalu too it is our strong belief that the weather is growing more severe, hotter and drier, and that there have been unusually high seas eroding foreshores and intruding into freshwater lenses. We believe that the cumulative effect of carbon dioxide emissions in industrial and other countries into the atmosphere has, in sum, created a future that is very uncertain in Tuvalu.

It may not be known in this Hall but unique within the United Nations membership are the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu. Those four countries are the only Member States that consist entirely of low-lying coral atolls and reef islands. In the event of further rising sea levels, where are we to hide? Eventually asking countries to take us in as environmental refugees is not what Tuvalu is after in the long run. What we prefer is that our great-grandchildren should grow up the way I did and the way my wife and our brothers and sisters did in our island communities, learning the traditions, customs and culture of Tuvalu, and living our way of life.

Tuvalu is not alone in sharing that view. Tens of millions of people who live on islands or in coastal communities face the gloomy onslaught of rising sea levels. Such vulnerable geography is everywhere. How ironic it would be if decades from now the last Member to enter the United Nations, Tuvalu, were the first Member State to withdraw because it had disappeared without a trace.

In the shrinking world we live in, environmental pollution has never known artificial boundaries. The presence of higher than normal levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is a legacy of development in industrial countries spanning the past 200 years. I hope that industrial countries realize that nature is now imposing a penalty for that development. Unfortunately, it is Tuvalu and others with little or nothing to do with the causes which are now forced to pay.

While we are heartened by the positive outcome of the seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held at Marrakesh, and while we are looking forward to the full implementation of that Convention and of the Kyoto Protocol commitments, we would also hope that goodwill will prevail beyond instruments and conventions to assist those most affected to adapt to the immediate and long-term effects of climate change.

This is not the time to shrink from environmental and survival responsibility. Like the international war being waged against terrorism, a global solution to the threat posed by climate change and sea-level rise will save Tuvalu and many other small island States from disappearing. Our collective resolve to remove causes of terrorism and threats to peace and security, including poverty and underdevelopment, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation, will ensure a truly peaceful and secure village for all of humanity.

May God bless the United Nations; may God bless its peoples.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Amraiya Naidu, Chairman of the delegation of Fiji.

**Mr. Naidu** (Fiji): Fiji mourns the recent losses and world-changing tragedies which the United States of America has endured. We remember the many lives lost in that adversity, and we express the hope that peace and goodwill may prevail. Now is the time to make haste to galvanize collaborative efforts by developed and developing nations in the global fight against terrorism.

We congratulate His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo and the Government of the Republic of Korea on Ambassador Han's assumption of the presidency of the

General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. We pledge complete support during his term of office, fully aware that the qualities that have marked his eminent and distinguished career promise a resounding conclusion to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly despite its difficult start.

Fitting tribute is also due to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland. His leadership over the previous year successfully concluded a truly hectic and full schedule of business, including some difficult issues and special sessions during the period of the fifty-fifth session. He leaves an indelible mark in the annals of the United Nations.

My Government congratulates His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan on his appointment as Secretary-General for a second term; this signifies the trust and confidence that the United Nations places in him. He has aptly been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which he shares with the United Nations. Fiji welcomes the road map he has outlined for the Organization, which, under his creative and competent leadership, will deliver the reforms needed to launch the Organization into the twenty-first century.

In the wake of the political crisis that triggered instability in Fiji in 2000, my Government set itself two immediate tasks: to restore constitutional democracy and to stabilize our fragile economy. Those goals are being achieved. Moreover, my Government is continuing to pursue strong economic performance through increased investment and development.

I am honoured to inform the Assembly that, only 18 months after its political crisis, Fiji successfully concluded the general elections and formed a multiparty Government in September 2001. My Government is confident that, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, Fiji's forward-looking policies will steer it ahead on a path of democratic rule and sustainable economic development.

Fiji acknowledges the support rendered to us by the United Nations and by Member States in the deployment of the United Nations electoral observation team during our elections. The team discharged its duties professionally and impartially. We are confident that it will provide the Assembly with a positive appraisal of the conduct of the elections as free and fair — conduct to which we have been well accustomed throughout our electoral history.

I should like to convey my Government's deep gratitude to those Member States that supported Fiji and to those that sponsored resolution 55/280, which enabled the participation of the United Nations observer team.

Our leaders are committed, under the Millennium Declaration of 2000, to the principles of human dignity, equality and equity, especially with respect to those who are most vulnerable, in particular the children, who are our future. It is a timely and constructive commitment that creates the necessary global framework for addressing the plight of the poor and the vulnerable in the face of the accelerating impact of globalization and trade liberalization.

Poverty is at the root of many problems. As the most powerful destabilizing force, it threatens democracy and good governance. It is thus our most insidious enemy. Successive *Human Development Reports* amply document abysmal accounts of poverty and poverty indicators. A total of 1.2 billion people live on less than $1 a day, more than a billion people in developing countries lack access to safe water, and more than 2.4 billion people lack adequate sanitation. We are talking not millions, but billions.

Poverty reduction is therefore our greatest challenge today. The Millennium Declaration set a target to halve global extreme poverty by 2015. This goal must be the cornerstone of all development efforts. It demands an ongoing commitment and effective measures on the part of the international community.

In this connection, my Government has created a new Ministry for Poverty Alleviation, which is a key policy factor in our triennial Strategic Development Plan. We recognize that economic, social and political stability are inextricably tied to reducing the gap between rich and poor. That equation must also recognize the unique vulnerabilities that beset the fragile economies of developing countries such as Fiji.

Complementary legislation is also being developed in the Social Justice Bill to translate into policy the constitutional provision for social equity. Primarily, the Bill will regulate affirmative action policies for disadvantaged groups in the areas and in the manner prescribed in the Fiji Constitution. This is a critical step in Fiji's efforts towards national unity and nation-building and its efforts to address issues of social, ethnic and economic development and harmony.

Today, in our journey in this world, we are meeting with unprecedented challenges and uncertainties, ranging from widespread global conflict to escalating terrorist activities and economic marginalization. The Assembly and the United Nations system must devise appropriate, creative responses to these difficult questions, in ways that are compatible with the goals of world peace and security, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Current organizational reform plans present constructive and necessary platforms for meeting these specific challenges. An amicable agreement on the expansion of the permanent or non-permanent membership of the Security Council could well present us with new and fresh avenues for solutions. My delegation reiterates our full support for an expansion of both membership categories of the Security Council. We congratulate the Security Council on the support that its landmark resolution 1325 (2000) received, a resolution whose implementation will allow for increased involvement on the part of women in the process of achieving peace and security.

Fiji has excelled in its efforts to achieve the peacekeeping goals of the United Nations Charter. We remain fully committed to this goal and to the Brahimi recommendations for reform. Our military is serving in various United Nations missions, including in Lebanon, East Timor and Kuwait. Our police officers are serving in Bosnia and Kosovo. It is gratifying to see positive conclusions to several peacekeeping mandates and their impending withdrawal or downsizing. We would caution, however, against any exit without strategy, in order to give credence to the huge investment of goodwill and resources by the United Nations and the international community, and to avoid a situation of double jeopardy for the people trapped in armed conflict.

In this regard, we support new measures to strengthen the protective regime of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Its scope needs to include United Nations and humanitarian personnel on the ground, who need real protection and security while working to ensure the safety of, and caring for, civilians.

Fiji has consistently advocated decolonization and self-determination since joining the United Nations. We note the delay in the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Fiji supports the ongoing work of the Committee of 24 and recognizes the political and diplomatic constraints involved.

Early on in this Second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, mostly small island Territories in the Caribbean and Pacific regions, need our focused attention, so that their legitimate aspirations for self-determination can be recognized.

The Declaration of Commitment on the HIV/AIDS pandemic demands that we exercise greater vigilance and focus sincerely on safeguarding our development gains and on our future goals. We in the Pacific are seeking to maintain our low infection rate trend, as we stand to lose the most if we fail to abide by that Declaration. Only collaboration and solidarity at the international, regional and national levels can save humanity from this invasive scourge.

Despite the recent political disturbances in Fiji, respect for the rule of law and for international human rights standards has been maintained. The continued existence and independence of the Fiji Human Rights Commission is testimony to our commitment to human rights.

Fiji, along with several of its Pacific Island neighbours, is for the first time facing the dilemmas posed by refugees and asylum seekers. International human trafficking has brought them to our shores, despite the vast distances between our lands. International refugees are the direct result of violations and breaches of human rights. As a State party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to its Protocol, Fiji pleads with Member States to respect the rights of refugees and to support the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. At the very least, Member States are obligated to protect the rights of their citizens in their own homeland.

Fiji co-sponsored the resolution on Korean peace, security and reunification during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are elated to see peace and reunification initiatives in the Korean peninsula.

Likewise, the small island developing States are seeking continually to enhance our international participation. Strengthening future relations between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum is a mutually beneficial avenue. This will allow for our effective participation in the United Nations system. It

also affords the United Nations with a unique and authentic Pacific perspective and voice. Cooperation between the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations is a welcome addition to this session's agenda and promises greater returns, with the support of Member States.

Our Pacific Islands Forum leaders will meet in Fiji in 2002. It is therefore opportune to renew our invitation to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, to visit the Pacific Islands Forum region. Recent political events in the Pacific and the successful domestic, regional and international initiatives to address these concerns can only be positively reinforced by such a high-level, goodwill visit by the Secretary-General, to take place early, rather than later, in his second term of office.

Our global development agenda demands of the United Nations an increased facilitating role in the coordination of economic, financial, trade and social issues. At the International Conference on Financing for Development in March 2002, stakeholders will deliberate on enhancing coherence and coordination between development and social objectives. Fiji hopes that the Conference will inspire the international community and financial institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to support and devise new standards and indicators, such as the vulnerability index, to effectively address poverty and other disparities.

Growing imbalances and marginalization in the world economy are a threat to humanity, in particular to Fiji and other small island developing States (SIDS). Sustainable development depends on a given level of resources to propel our fragile economies forward. Moreover, these resources are needed to sustain long-term, sound, economic and environmentally friendly development. The critical role of the international community is to assist us in nation-building and efficient resource utilization so that we can fulfil our social obligations.

Fiji has long expounded to the international community how vulnerable and heavily dependent our economies are on the vagaries and whims of the global economy. Our small size, extremely remote distance from the international markets and increasing susceptibility to natural disasters do not lend themselves well to economies of scale of production, to building export-based trade or to gaining competitive access to foreign markets for our products. Clearly, our ability to benefit fully from globalization is doomed from the start, further aggravating the divide between the rich and poor. It is my Government's aspiration that the scope of equitable and tangible benefits from globalization and trade liberalization is still to be fully realized if we are to meaningfully tackle global and human poverty.

As a member of the World Trade Organization, Fiji is concerned at the fast erosion of trade preferences in the world trade in agricultural products, sugar being a mainstay of our economy. Increasingly, we fear that small island States like my own, which depend predominantly on agricultural export commodities, will be seriously affected without adequate market safeguards. We are forced to question the efficacy of a multilateral trade framework as a fair mechanism in promoting the interests of SIDS like Fiji.

In this context, we welcome the current work on financing for development and preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Targeted assistance and official development assistance programmes to enable us to fully implement and strengthen investment and productivity must necessarily complement our efforts through regional or multilateral trading agreements. We are optimistic that next year's high-level conferences will flag our concerns in line with the Barbados Programme of Action and the development goals that are set out in the Millennium Declaration.

**The Acting President**: I call on Mr. Patrick Albert Lewis, Chairman of the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda.

**Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda): Antigua and Barbuda is pleased that this is the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. However, we can have meaningful dialogue only if the dominant countries reach out with genuine understanding when others speak. We can have dialogue only if the basic principles of the United Nations are made the core of reality. We cannot have dialogue if multilateralism remains selective or if the principle of rotation continues to be based on demographics, military might and economic principles. The people of my country represent an integral part of human civilization and we wish to contribute our voice and our ideas to the debate on the future of the journey of humankind on this planet.

The tragic events of 11 September in the host country of the United Nations have presented a challenge to world civilization. The Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda on Thursday, 18 October, passed strong anti-terrorism legislation. Also, the Caribbean Community, meeting in special emergency session in the Bahamas on 11 and 12 October, recognized terrorism as a global problem requiring a resolute global response. The heads of Government stated:

> "We are conscious that the unprecedented and barbaric terrorist assaults of 11 September will require of us extraordinary vigilance and coordination in the future, to ensure that our territories, our institutions and our citizens are not used in any manner to facilitate the activities of terrorists or to undermine our national and regional security."

We share the agony of the United States, for we too had nationals who perished in the 11 September atrocity. We fully support Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which makes it obligatory for all States to impose far-reaching measures to combat the scourge of terrorism. We support the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. International terrorism is in reality an act of war against the world's peace-loving peoples. It is imperative that all countries of the world address in a more meaningful manner the underlying social, economic and political problems that cause human misery and perpetuate injustice. We must act to ensure that the entire global society lives in an environment of freedom and is free from fear. The fight against terrorism will be a long and arduous one, but it is one in which we must thoroughly and completely engage ourselves.

Antigua and Barbuda has now ratified the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court. The citizens of my country believe that in the prospect of an international criminal court lies the promise of universal justice, since the Court will have the power to indict individuals. Antigua and Barbuda is certainly disappointed that crimes pertaining to drug trafficking and terrorism have been put on the back burner at the International Criminal Court, but we are prepared to continue our dialogue to bring them under the ambit of the Court when it becomes active. The cancer of drug trafficking will continue to threaten human civilization until we fashion a truly global response to its menace.

The battles in Seattle, Windsor and Quebec are an integral part of world civilization's struggle to humanize globalization. Interestingly, we find ourselves agreeing with the statement made by the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in his address to members of the Deutsche Bundestag on 2 April 2001 in Berlin. Mr. Köhler declared that it is political and economic madness for Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to spend $360 billion a year on agricultural subsidies, while poverty rages in developing countries, especially in the rural and farming regions. He went on to say that it is high time for industrial countries to honour their commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit, my own Prime Minister, Lester Bird, castigated the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development for its unilaterally devised set of standards for international taxation to be imposed on other jurisdictions and for demanding that States change their domestic laws to suit OECD purposes. The rule of law has become the rule of the jungle, where rules do not apply, and only might is right. In reality, the OECD Harmful Tax Competition project has nothing to do with money laundering, but has more to do with the fact that OECD believes that its member States would lose capital to other States with more competitive tax regimes.

Globalization has left States like my own with a feeling of exclusion, a feeling of being cast aside and pushed outside, from where we observe the gains of the dominant. It is a feeling of not being able to participate in the determination of our own destiny. The "green room" process evident at World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meetings has done nothing but increase our apprehension. We call for serious reform of the global political and economic architecture to be undertaken, both at the United Nations and at the World Trade Organization. The multilateral trading system needs to be transparent. It needs to be fair and equitable, and all countries should be able to share in its benefits.

Antigua and Barbuda, as a small island State, is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters. The most prevalent threat is that of hurricanes, three of which recently impacted our sister States of Belize, Cuba and the Bahamas. A single hurricane can set back the

development of a small island State by 10 years. Between 1995 and 2000, our beloved twin island State was hit by seven hurricanes.

We call on the international community to acknowledge in a meaningful way the vulnerability of small States like Antigua and Barbuda. We point to our lack of capacity in financial and human resources to bounce back from natural disasters and from external shocks to its economy caused by economic recession in the major economies of the world, which also happen to be our main trading partners. It is therefore imperative that we be able to continue to access concessionary financing through the World Bank. Our social and economic development needs, including infrastructure, seem not to register in the boardrooms of the international financial institutions.

Countries like Antigua and Barbuda are viewed as middle income because of the per capita income criterion, but this is a flawed measurement and should be abandoned. Financing for development should take into account a mix of factors and should be linked to the vulnerability index on which the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has done important work.

No account is taken of the considerable transaction costs faced by small States because of their remoteness and the disproportionate burden they bear in order to effectively participate in world trade. No account is taken of the openness of our economy to goods and services from all over the world, without corresponding market access for our own limited range of goods to the markets of Europe and North America. An inhospitable stranger known as "non-tariff barriers" continues to slam the door in our face.

In these circumstances, we cannot overemphasize how important it is for the IMF and the World Bank to apply special and differential treatment to measuring the fiscal and economic performance of small island States. Our limited capacity to raise revenue and our necessity to spend at a disproportionate level in order to maintain a decent standard of living for our people should lead the IMF to have special and differential programmes of assistance for small island States. These programmes should not merely prescribe the traditional formula of large-scale public sector dismissals and reduction of public sector investment programmes. Instead, innovative ways should be found to provide long-term financing at repayment periods and rates of interest that would allow small States to maintain democracy, human rights, low crime rates and economic growth.

My country welcomes the successful conclusion of the Marrakesh meeting on climate change, where the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change finalized the operational details of the Kyoto Protocol, thereby opening the way to widespread ratification by Governments and the Protocol's early entry into force. This was the result of several years of tough negotiation in which Antigua and Barbuda was very active and took a leadership position. What we now have in place are the institutions and detailed procedures of the Kyoto Protocol, and the next step is to test their effectiveness in overseeing the five per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions by developed countries over the next decade.

The agreements reached in Marrakesh also made important progress on strengthening the flow of financial and technological support to developing countries so that they can move towards a sustainable energy future. They also send a clear signal to business, local governments and the general public that climate-friendly products, services and activities will be rewarded by consumers and national policies alike.

The meeting also adopted the Marrakesh Ministerial Declaration as an input into next September's World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg. The Declaration emphasizes the contribution that action on climate change can make to sustainable development and calls for capacity building, technology innovation and cooperation with the Biodiversity and Desertification Conventions. With the Summit a little less than a year away, small island developing States such as my own, which are among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, continue to urge the speedy ratification of the Protocol.

That will require a global coalition among States to ensure that it enters into force and becomes legally binding after it has been ratified by at least 55 parties to the Convention, including the industrialized countries that represent at least 55 per cent of the total 1990 carbon dioxide emissions from this group. While it remains true that those with the highest per capita levels of greenhouse gas emissions should take the lead, it is incumbent upon all countries to work

together to ensure that there is full compliance with commitments contained in the Protocol.

There is a deep concern in our countries, a concern that takes on paramount proportions and that is centred around the transhipment of nuclear waste through the waters of the Caribbean Sea, and which represents a blatant disregard of our sovereignty. The countries of the Caribbean have insisted that it be stopped, but to no avail; and our populations live in constant fear of an accident. We call on those who engage in this deadly traffic to respect the rights of transit States such as Antigua and Barbuda.

The most populous democracy in the world, India, spoke on the first day of the general debate and highlighted concerns that we find it necessary to reiterate. There needs to be a more determined movement towards the liquidation of the external debts of low income and highly indebted countries. There should be poverty alleviation programmes designed for countries facing financial crises, and there should be stabilization of international prices of primary commodity exports.

The measures that we have outlined here are essential to building a just and equitable international order. Anything less would simply be the imposition of the will of the powerful upon the pusillanimous. All societies are measured by the way they treat their most vulnerable members, and the international community of nations is no different. I call on all representatives here assembled to heed the plea of the victims and to construct an international order that can lift human civilization to achieve the highest ideals of the United Nations.

**The Acting President**: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Raynard Gideon, Chairman of the delegation of the Marshall Islands.

**Mr. Gideon** (Marshall Islands): On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands allow me to offer cordial congratulations to the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, and to offer the Marshall Islands unreserved cooperation in our deliberations at this session.

I must also express my sincere gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, whose outstanding leadership was instrumental in making the fifty-fifth session, coined the Millennium Assembly, highly successful.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands also pays tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election to a second term as Secretary-General, as well as on winning the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, which is a very well-deserved and timely recognition of the Organization and of the Secretary-General's wisdom and dedication to the service of mankind.

It is with a heavy heart and deep sorrow that the Government of President Kessai Note and the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands reiterate to the Government and people of the United States of America their deepest sympathy and condolences for the suffering and pain caused by the terrorist attacks of 11 September. Similarly, we wish to convey our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the other great nations that were directly affected by that tragic and inhuman act. They were not alone in their daily trials and tribulations; the Republic of the Marshall Islands was with them. Furthermore, we extend our solidarity and condolences to the Government and people of the Dominican Republic, who suffered losses in the recent crash of American Airlines flight 587.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands condemns all acts of terrorism. I am pleased to inform the Assembly of the ratification by the Government of the Marshall Islands of six conventions and treaties related to terrorism. They are the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, the Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection, and the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages.

The marked worldwide increase in behaviours abhorrent to human dignity, freedom and basic rights of innocent people encouraged the early ratification of the Rome Statute by the Marshall Islands, which calls for the establishment of an International Criminal Court. The Republic of the Marshall Islands welcomes an early establishment of the Court and the implementation of its mandate.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands remains fully committed to the principles enshrined in the

human rights bill. The Government is currently in the process of ratifying the following conventions: the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We are committed to accede to them in a timely manner.

Given the unique conditions under which we seek our livelihood, our Government has been readily supportive of new scientific breakthroughs and innovations for the betterment of the world. However, we feel there are certain scientific initiatives that run counter to human decency. In this regard, we fully associate ourselves with the call by the Governments of Germany and of France for a universal convention banning human cloning for reproductive purposes. We believe that such a scientific endeavour would directly violate the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, drawn up by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 53/152. Article 11 of that Declaration specifies that

> "Practices which are contrary to human dignity, such as reproductive cloning of human beings, shall not be permitted."

As in the past, the Republic of the Marshall Islands will continue to voice in the strongest terms possible and in the best form at its disposal, its concerns and fears over issues relating to climate change and rising sea levels. The Assembly is aware that several Pacific island countries are represented in this Organization. Like other small island countries, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is plagued by a unique set of problems. Our coastal zones have become highly vulnerable to erosion, our groundwater systems are affected by high levels of saltwater intrusion, and increasing salinity is having a direct impact on our subsistence cropping. Such vulnerabilities, together with prolonged drought, constitute a deadly peril for our health and survival.

We welcome the successful outcome of the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which recently concluded in Marrakesh. The Kyoto Protocol is the best available solution to address our environmental concerns. We should be able to look back in the coming days and commend ourselves for the mission that is to be accomplished. We owe it to our children and to our children's children.

The Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of State or Government during the Millennium Assembly, should serve as our guiding framework and road map for achieving sustainable development, eradicating poverty, combating HIV/AIDS, preventing illegal trafficking in small arms and safeguarding the environment.

Immediately following the Millennium Assembly, President Kessai H. Note convened a broad-based economic and social summit, the outcome of which was the development of a national planning vision — a guiding framework for a long-term national development programme. I commend Member States for their generous support and assistance for this initiative.

The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands is of the view that the United Nations must move forward proactively in its reform process. We commend the Secretary-General for his reform programme. However, much more needs to be done. We encourage the Fifth Committee and United Nations funds and programmes to support and cooperate in the reform process.

The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands fully supports the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, based on equity, to include developed and developing countries so as to respond to the realities and challenges of our contemporary world. We note that certain issues need to be agreed on. We should move forward with broad-based agreement and revisit our differences.

Now that this Organization has 189 Member States, 14 of them being from the Pacific region, the reconfiguration of our electoral groupings should be an additional matter to be placed on the table. It may be a complex issue, but through our collective efforts and inspiration, the goal can be achieved, and it should be considered without further delay.

The exclusion from this body and its related agencies of the Republic of China on Taiwan is a major, serious hindrance to the Government of the

Republic of China on Taiwan in its pursuit of its fundamental rights to participate in international dialogue and regional organizations and activities. The time has come once again to reconsider the exclusion of the Republic of China on Taiwan from this prestigious body. There is so much that the Republic of China on Taiwan could do, in cooperation with the United Nations system, in the areas of sustainable development, technology, health, peace and prosperity.

In conclusion, the Republic of the Marshall Islands pledges its commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

God bless the United Nations.

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Claude Morel, Chairman of the delegation of Seychelles.

**Mr. Morel** (Seychelles): My delegation would like to congratulate Mr. Han on his dynamic stewardship of the deliberations of the General Assembly at this session. Our felicitations also go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the United Nations on being honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize.

The brutal and tragic events that took place in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11 September were the result of acts against not only the United States, but the international community at large.

In his message of condolence to President George W. Bush, the President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr. France Albert René, condemned the terrorist attacks in the strongest terms, stating

> "Our global village cannot tolerate such acts that disrespect the value of human life and jeopardize world peace and stability."

The subsequent military action in Afghanistan was understood, in principle, by the Seychelles Government as being in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs, in an interview with the local media, referred to this military action as "self-defence", and expressed the wish that only the terrorist networks and their clearly identified allies would be targeted, as part of a carefully proportioned action plan, sparing civilian populations and avoiding any kind of linkage between religious faiths and ideologically based deviation.

The Seychelles Government agrees with the following principles. Terrorism is a threat to international peace and security. There is no political or religious justification for such violence. We vigorously condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Further to the events of 11 September, Seychelles recognizes the right of the United States Government to react under guiding principles of international law and to bring the perpetrators to justice. But there is also a need to acknowledge the root causes of terrorism, including extreme poverty, despair and injustice, and to strongly advocate concerted efforts and collective commitment throughout the world to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment. Based on those principles and concerns, the position of my Government does not diverge from the views and recommendations expressed by the international community.

We appreciate the authority of the United Nations in providing global legitimacy for a universal response against terrorism. The war on terrorism must be fought on many fronts. The elaboration of a broad, long-term strategy for combating international terrorism, including military, political, diplomatic, legal and economic means, is of paramount importance.

Seychelles welcomes Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001, which outlines clear steps and measures that all United Nations Member States must now implement in order to prevent and suppress terrorist activities. My country is fully committed to implementing the provisions of the resolution, despite being handicapped by the constraints linked to lack of capacities and resources.

Seychelles is a party to six of the 12 existing United Nations conventions and protocols on terrorism. My Government is taking steps to accede to the remaining six. Furthermore, we have also decided to accede to the 1999 Organization of African Unity Algiers Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism.

Seychelles fully supports the ongoing negotiations to elaborate a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. We commend the personal intervention of Secretary-General Annan in trying to bridge differences and achieve consensus. It is our hope that, despite the complex and sensitive nature of the issues being addressed, the international community will arrive at an agreement very soon.

Bearing in mind the unprecedented international mobilization against terrorism and the magnitude of the

present situation, we consider that the larger, influential Members of the United Nations, particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, should manifest their strong political will and backing in resolving regional conflicts in all parts of the globe. Above all, they must intensify their efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. Let us not underestimate the fact that regional conflicts are often breeding grounds for terrorism.

It was mentioned earlier that terrorism is rooted in poverty. The United Nations must engage its full potential to vigorously pursue its development agenda. This should comprise, inter alia, the drive for the alleviation of poverty and achieving sustainable development, the quest for equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization, and the achievement of the Millennium Summit goals, as well as the success of next year's International Conference on Financing for Development and World Summit on Sustainable Development.

As a small island State whose economy depends mainly on tourism and related industries, Seychelles' vulnerability is obviously at issue should the ongoing military campaign in Afghanistan persist. As a peaceful community enjoying stability and social harmony, Seychelles, without questioning its strong moral support for the cause of international security, also encourages a dialogue giving the voices of reason and compassion a chance to be heard, especially with regard to the needs of the Afghan people, who have lived three decades of war, resulting in the suffering of very large numbers of refugees and displaced persons.

Finally, my country would like to lay stress on the urgency for the United Nations to rethink the world order, not just in terms of geopolitical balance, but in terms of a new ethic. International terrorism cannot be fought by way of offensive weapons, either traditional or sophisticated. To agree on a common value system is, in the middle and long terms, a more profitable orientation for the whole of humanity.

This being said, my country renews its adhesion to the international coalition of nations that are united in the war on international terrorism and in the quest for worldwide peace and security.

**The Acting President**: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sonatane Tua Taumoepeau Tupou, Chairman of the delegation of Tonga.

**Mr. Tupou** (Tonga): In congratulating Mr. Han Seung-soo upon his assumption of high office, I must also praise his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, for an outstanding tenure as the President who ushered in the new millennium. If the Millennium Summit and its Declaration could be considered the hallmark of Mr. Holkeri's presidency, then Mr. Han's already has one of equally impressive terms with the Organization and its Secretary-General being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Therefore, the re-election of Mr. Kofi Annan for a second term as Secretary-General is sure testament not only to his own personal dedication, creative leadership and unwavering sense of spirit, but also to the vision and faith of the Organization's Member States.

I take this occasion to offer Tonga's solace to all affected delegations, and in particular the delegations of the Dominican Republic and the United States, for whom the tragedy that befell their communities on 12 November has such a profound bearing.

Like other Member States, Tonga takes this occasion to express our sympathy and condolences to the President and people of the United States for the suffering and loss of life incurred during the attacks of 11 September. In doing so, Tonga condemns in the strongest possible terms these acts of terror, which remain without moral or lawful justification.

The events of 11 September have focused our Organization's attention on terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and, more importantly, on the need to address this issue comprehensively. As such, Tonga commends the timely and decisive action taken by the Security Council with respect to the events of 11 September. In doing so, we fully support the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its mandated efforts to combat terrorism.

It has been stated that terrorism offends the core values of our Organization, and that is true. The irony is that, inasmuch as the events of 11 September were an affront to one's sense of humanity, it is this very humanity that has risen to prevail over extreme adversity. If last year's catchphrase during the Millennium Summit was "We, the peoples", that call is all the more pertinent this year in our collective efforts to combat terrorism.

As part of its contribution to these efforts, Tonga is taking steps to carefully study and consider the United Nations conventions on terrorism that it is not

party to. However, merely becoming parties to conventions will not be sufficient. Concrete steps will be needed if small countries like ours are to fully and meaningfully take part in these efforts.

For example, Tonga's efforts to develop, implement and maintain counter-terrorism measures will require sustained financial and expert technical assistance on a solid foundation of a network of information exchange between relevant law enforcement and aviation agencies. In this regard, our efforts in combating terrorism will be but a microcosm for addressing a wider plethora of development issues.

As much as the Millennium Declaration concerned new commitments, or renewed commitments in some instances, Tonga commends the report of the Secretary-General for its innovation and detailed description as to how implementation of the Declaration might be taken forward.

We look towards the International Conference on Financing for Development as a further opportunity to pursue a wide range of crucial thematic issues which are particularly critical to the development aspirations of developing countries. The balance required for forging consensus on these thematic issues is as important as the balance between official development assistance and the mobilization of limited domestic resources.

While the Declaration of the recently concluded World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Doha might give rise to optimism, Tonga seeks a simplified, streamlined and expeditious accession process for small island developing States like ours who wish to join the WTO. In this regard, we congratulate the People's Republic of China upon its entry into the organization. A more flexible approach and time frame within which to meet obligations are needed to enable countries like Tonga to adopt measures so as to fully participate in the WTO system and to fulfil the obligations of the WTO agreements while minimizing any adverse impacts upon our populace. Such an accession process can be achieved only with continuing technical and financial assistance.

We further look towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a complementary step in the development path towards the reinvigoration of targeted commitments to sustainable development — especially those concerning small island developing States — as contained in Agenda 21. We continue to call on the international community for refocused commitment to and implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. Tonga's preparations for this Summit, through its national assessment report, will include identifying areas for specific and priority capacity-building needs as well as avenues by which to take greater advantage of financial and technological support.

While Tonga recognizes the merit of the economic vulnerability index as a measure for economic impacts, its application should encompass all small island developing States and not serve as a means to draw superficial differences between them. After all, the economic vulnerability index is an accurate reflection of the true realities of small island developing States, and if those realities are not fully addressed, we shall continue to perch precariously on the edge of the precipice. Therefore, we continue to support the development of an appropriate environmental vulnerability index, and we commend the work of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission in this regard. We believe that such an index will provide accurate indicators of factors to which small islands are vulnerable, such as natural disasters, sea-level rise and climate change. Tonga therefore welcomes the consensus reached at Marrakech at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the further opportunities for progress that it presents.

As a developing ocean State, we continue to seek our fair share of the harvest from the ocean which bounds us on all sides. We welcome in particular the preparations for making effective the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. We urge the distant water fishing nations in our region with a real interest in fisheries to make every effort to become party to a convention that is the hallmark of our commitment to the conservation and sustainable management of a critically important resource. Tonga continues to value the work and decisions this year at the eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority and the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea — UNICPOLOS.

We continue to view information and communication technologies as the way to go, and we

are making our own efforts to bridge the digital divide to take full advantage of the digital revolution. Maximizing such efforts will require complementary efforts in tandem with the international community and the United Nations. We urge continued support for the Small Islands Developing States Network, SIDSnet, and efforts to strengthen its capacity to support and assist small island developing States.

Tonga welcomes the adoption of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the establishment of the global fund to combat this scourge. We look forward to the implementation of the Declaration and commend those Member States who have pledged their financial support to the fund.

We continue to support the effort to reform the Security Council. In this regard, as was presented by a delegation during the debate on Security Council reform, we could support either proposal for an expansion of the number of permanent seats: by two, with an expansion of the number of non-permanent seats by three, or, alternatively, by three, with the number of non-permanent seats increased by four. While cognizant that issues pertaining to the veto and its exercise in such an expansion would continue to demand handling with the utmost sensitivity and care, we urge that where there are issues of convergence, steps should be taken to consolidate such convergence, and where unresolved issues remain, that these be the focus of continuing dialogue and discussion.

Finally, with respect to pertinent regional issues in the Pacific, Tonga endorses the views expressed in the Nauru communiqué, now contained in document A/56/388, which was the outcome of the annual meeting of Pacific Island Forum leaders at Nauru in August this year.

**The Acting President**: I now call on Mr. Clifford Sibusiso Mamba, Chairman of the delegation of Swaziland.

**Mr. Mamba** (Swaziland): It is an honour and privilege for me to deliver this statement on behalf of His Majesty King Mswati III. I wish to convey the greetings and warm wishes of His Majesty, Her Majesty The Queen Mother, Ndlovukazi, the Government and the entire Swazi nation to all our friends and fellow Members of the United Nations.

The Kingdom of Swaziland offers her warmest congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. We are confident that with his proven abilities and leadership, he will guide us to success in our deliberations at this time of crisis in global affairs.

Allow me to express our appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri, of Finland, who, by his astute and judicious leadership, brought to a successful conclusion the work of the fifty-fifth session.

The Kingdom of Swaziland would further like to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for leading our Organization so effectively through his tenure thus far. We will continue to depend on his highly developed sense of diplomacy and his undoubted commitment to achieve global peace, stability and equitable development. The recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to both the Secretary-General and the United Nations attests to the aforementioned attributes.

We are also grateful for the continuing dedication and hard work of the staff of the United Nations, whose efforts are needed all the more in these challenging times. In this regard, we call upon all our fellow Members to demonstrate their support for the Secretary-General and his staff by honouring their financial obligations, so that our Organization can have sufficient resources with which to meet the widening scope of its activities.

We are meeting one year after the historic gathering of world leaders, when the international community sought to redefine and articulate a common vision for the future of all its citizens. The goals to be achieved were clearly set out in the Millennium Declaration as an outcome of the Millennium Summit. Today we have the opportunity — indeed, the responsibility — to evaluate just how far we have come in that mission which we set for ourselves through this Organization. We need to address honestly our shortcomings in commitment and action and to further devise practical and realistic strategies that will result in measurable progress in areas identified for urgent action.

The Kingdom of Swaziland therefore believes that the promotion of sustainable international peace and security must be one of the main priorities of the United Nations, because it is clear that our collective aim of raising the living standard of our peoples is

possible only in conditions of global stability and with nations living harmoniously alongside one another.

The Kingdom of Swaziland joined the rest of the world in condemnation of the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September, to which the international community must respond because such acts are an assault on human decency and humanity. These acts cannot be justified under any circumstances. The Kingdom of Swaziland repudiates such acts and aligns itself with all peace-loving people around the world not only in condemning such acts, but also in calling for their complete eradication. To that end, the Kingdom of Swaziland will do all in its power to prevent acts of terrorism and to ensure that the support and financing of terrorism cannot take root on Swazi soil. We once more offer our sympathy and prayers to the families and friends of those who lost their lives in the tragedy.

Future global stability is threatened by the spread of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the unabated proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Vigorous and urgent efforts are needed to eliminate these weapons. In this regard, we welcome the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We deem their outcomes timely and necessary.

While much has been done through the process of reform effected by the Secretary-General, it is also recognized that there has been very little progress made so far by the Open-ended Working Group to address the most important aspect of the reform: the restructuring of the Security Council. More intensified efforts should be made to bring to a conclusion the deliberations on this issue, and we look forward to the leadership of the President of the General Assembly in advancing negotiations towards a lasting solution. The Kingdom of Swaziland is still committed to the process of the reform for the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of its membership. In that regard, we continue to support the African position in favour of two permanent seats and three non-permanent seats being allocated to the African continent.

The Kingdom of Swaziland believes that the United Nations, in conjunction with regional organizations, must take on a more proactive role in preventive diplomacy to head off potentially explosive situations. We need an effective early warning capability to deal with emerging conflicts and much closer collaboration between the Security Council and the Office of the Secretary-General in our efforts to meet security challenges wherever they may occur.

At this time, our Organization is understandably focused on global security. The crisis in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority is a component of the overall challenge and continues to pose a significant threat to security in both the Middle East and the wider world at large. The Kingdom of Swaziland believes that the only solution to the continuing instability in that region is through peaceful dialogue and a return to the spirit of compromise and understanding that has characterized the relationship between the two sides in the past. We commend the efforts of all who are trying to bring lasting, sustainable peace to the Middle East, and we offer our encouragement and support for the achievement of this goal.

On the African continent, security challenges continue to cause suffering and restrict the development of many millions of our people. While this is undeniable, it is also clear that Africa itself is taking on the responsibility to find solutions to the crises affecting a number of its nations. The peace processes in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea and Angola all have benefited from the involvement of our regional and subregional groupings and from the efforts of dedicated African men and women. The Kingdom of Swaziland supports unequivocally these efforts, and we join our fellow African Member States in calling for continued and enhanced support from the United Nations and individual countries and for commitments in word to be followed up by action.

In developmental terms, there is a new wind blowing through all the African countries, bringing fresh hope to our peoples for improved standards of living and the removal of the burdens of the past. A series of historic agreements by all African countries indicates a new era of optimism for the continent, as well as the start of a new relationship with the rest of the world. The continent will no longer tolerate the notion of unconstitutional Governments, and we have all confirmed our belief that transparency and accountability are the watchwords of governance that places people at the centre of development.

We also believe that trade with the rest of the world is the lifeblood of our developing economies, encouraging the creation of businesses and inward and local investment and increasing employment. We therefore commend those countries and trading blocs that recognize the importance to Africa of freeing up their markets for our goods and services and encourage others to follow suit.

The birth of the African Union is a signal to the rest of the world that Africa means business and is ready to back up its words with action. The New African Initiative proposes a partnership that is based on support for an Africa that recognizes and accepts its responsibilities from a world that understands our priorities for development. We commend the initiative to those who are in a position to help Africa emerge from the disappointments of the past into a prosperous and secure future.

We are on the edge of a global recession, and its effects will be felt hardest among those of us in the developing world. After a decade of encouraging talk of the benefits of globalization, we are discovering the hard truth: that we are nowhere near the stage of being able to gain advantage from a world of liberalized trade. This must now surely be plain for anyone to see.

Globalization in its unfettered form is likely to do more harm than good to the small, vulnerable economies unless measures are put in place to protect them in the short to medium term. There must be agreed ground rules to regulate the conduct of free trade in goods and services to ensure an equitable exchange between unequal partners.

Considering the intrinsic link between peace, security and development, the United Nations has an even bigger responsibility to increase its efforts to secure resources to finance development, especially for those of us most at risk in these times of economic uncertainty. We believe it is the responsibility of the wider international community to continue to provide resources to assist developing countries to fight their way out of poverty.

The Kingdom of Swaziland continues to develop confidently and peacefully, according to the wishes of its people. Our review of the Constitution was completed earlier this year, and the recommendations of the people will now be drafted into a legal document for final approval by the Swazi nation next year. This vital nation-building process will result in a Constitution that is based entirely on the wishes of the people themselves, and we are confident that it will serve the best interests of the Kingdom for many generations to come.

Poverty alleviation remains the top priority for the Kingdom, and we continue to make great efforts to achieve this aim through a series of economic measures, such as investment attraction, increased trade and the stimulation of local entrepreneurship. We are embarking on an ambitious programme to maximize the potential of our tourism and industry sectors, and in this we need the support of the international financial institutions, as well as the United Nations Development Programme.

Despite our best efforts, and in common with all developing countries, the Kingdom is finding progress difficult to achieve in the face of huge obstacles, with the greatest undoubtedly being the threat to our future posed by the HIV/AIDS crisis. During the United Nations special session on HIV/AIDS held here in June, we made clear the scale of the disaster facing our nation. There is no doubt that the spread of HIV among the population represents our greatest development challenge, and we are working hard in a combined, national effort to overcome the devastating effects of the pandemic.

However, we cannot do this alone. We need substantial support to implement our strategy of education, prevention, care and counselling. Finances, drugs, expertise and guidance are all urgently required. The very survival of our nation is at stake, and we appeal once more to the United Nations and to the international community at large not to abandon us at this moment of supreme necessity.

It could be said that there has been an inauspicious start to the twenty-first century, with the globalization of terrorism and the reality of a global economic recession at the forefront of our minds. This places all the more responsibility on the United Nations to harness the resources and commitment of the citizens of the world for the benefit of humankind. In this regard, there is a compelling need to include all peoples of the world, as envisaged by our founding fathers and as enshrined in the principle of universality.

Acknowledging the importance of this principle, the Kingdom of Swaziland raises once more the question of the inclusion of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the activities of the United Nations and its

associated agencies. We appeal on behalf of the 23 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan for their right to representation in the United Nations Organization. The Government and people of the Republic of China on Taiwan have shown themselves to be wholly committed to observing the principles and spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Charter of the United Nations.

In addition to the peaceful democratic transition that took place last year, the recent admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the World Trade Organization attests to the significant contribution the Republic of China has made and will continue to make to international trade. The Republic of China on Taiwan has shown time and again its willingness to participate in efforts to bring about true global peace, development and security, and its commitment to utilize its resources for the benefit of mankind.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has been at the forefront of efforts to support the readmittance of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the United Nations. Our position on this important issue remains unchanged. We therefore appeal to our fellow Members to support the establishment of a working group to examine in detail the exceptional international situation relating to the Republic of China on Taiwan, with a view to ensuring that its 23 million people can contribute actively to the international community through participation in the United Nations and its related agencies.

At the Millennium Summit, we the Member States of the United Nations agreed to seize the opportunity to forge a new era of optimism for the world, based on equality, peace and prosperity. That opportunity is fading fast, and we need to redouble our efforts and determination to make that vision a reality. The Kingdom of Swaziland renews its commitment to the Charter and aims of the United Nations and offers to its fellow Members assurances of continued support for all activities that will help the world to achieve a better future for all its peoples.

*The President in the Chair*

**Programme of work**

**The President**: On Wednesday, 21 November 2001, in the morning, the General Assembly will take up sub-item (d) of agenda item 16, "Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: Election of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme" as the second item for that morning.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*